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THE SLIP-CARRIAGE MYSTERY

LYNN BROCK

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COLONEL GORE'S CASES. No. 4.
THE SLIP-CARRIAGE MYSTERY

This is the Story

THIS, the successor to *The Deductions of Colonel Gore*, *Colonel Gore's Second Case*, and *The Kink*, is the fourth volume of the series which, both in this country and in America, has achieved so enormous a popularity. The mystery which Colonel Gore solves in this case, and the manner of its solution, is presented by an original method which lends to the book a sinister and arresting vividness. As always, Mr. Brock's character-drawing is unhesitating and masterly, his impressions of certain aspects of post-war Society in England unflinchingly true to fact.



By the Same Author

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COLONEL GORE'S CASES. No. 4.

THE SLIP-CARRIAGE MYSTERY

by

LYNN BROCK, *pseud.*

Author of "Colonel Gore's Second Case,"
"Colonel Gore's Third Case, The Kink," etc.

Alister McAllister



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TO MY WIFE

**IN MEMORY
OCT. 1927—JAN. 1928**

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PART I
PRELUDE

PRELUDE

ON the afternoon of a certain November day, Colonel Gore, the Senior Partner of Messrs. Gore & Tolley, Private Inquiry Agents, Rye House, Norfolk Street, Strand, received in his office, from the hands of a very reticent gentleman from the Home Office, the following communication and the enclosures to which it referred.

"DEAR SIR,—Reference your conversation with Mr. Cavendish on the 9th inst. I enclose the documents in connection with the matter, for your perusal. (R.10693/78 K.) Kindly acknowledge receipt on enclosed form.

"I am instructed to request that great care may be taken of these documents, which are to be regarded as highly confidential.

"I am to request further that you will peruse the statements at your earliest convenience, and inform me when you have done so. We can then arrange an interview with the Home Secretary to discuss the matter further.

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your obedient Servant,

"R. STONE."

It was the first commission which Messrs. Gore & Tolley had received from the Home Office, and the Senior Partner allowed himself a perhaps pardonable

satisfaction as he signed the form of receipt and handed it to the silent envoy. He had made all arrangements for an afternoon of uninterrupted work. Within five minutes of his visitor's departure, he was seated at his desk, with the second enclosure of Mr. Stone's letter before him.

It consisted of a number of typewritten statements, copies of original documents, signed by various persons, and enclosed in a jacket of sombre red, bearing on its outside merely the prosaic index number, R.10693/78 K. But Gore's interview with Mr. Cavendish on the 9th inst. had informed him very precisely of the nature of the task which lay before him.

On the 28th of the October of the preceding year, Sir William Ireland, a very wealthy colliery and foundry owner in the west of England, had been found murdered in a railway carriage at Shenstone Station. The crime had attracted much popular attention at the time, owing to the circumstances under which it had been committed and certain rather mysterious features in the evidence given at the inquest. It was not, however, an affair of which any particulars had registered themselves very accurately in Gore's mind, until the afternoon of November 5th of the following year.

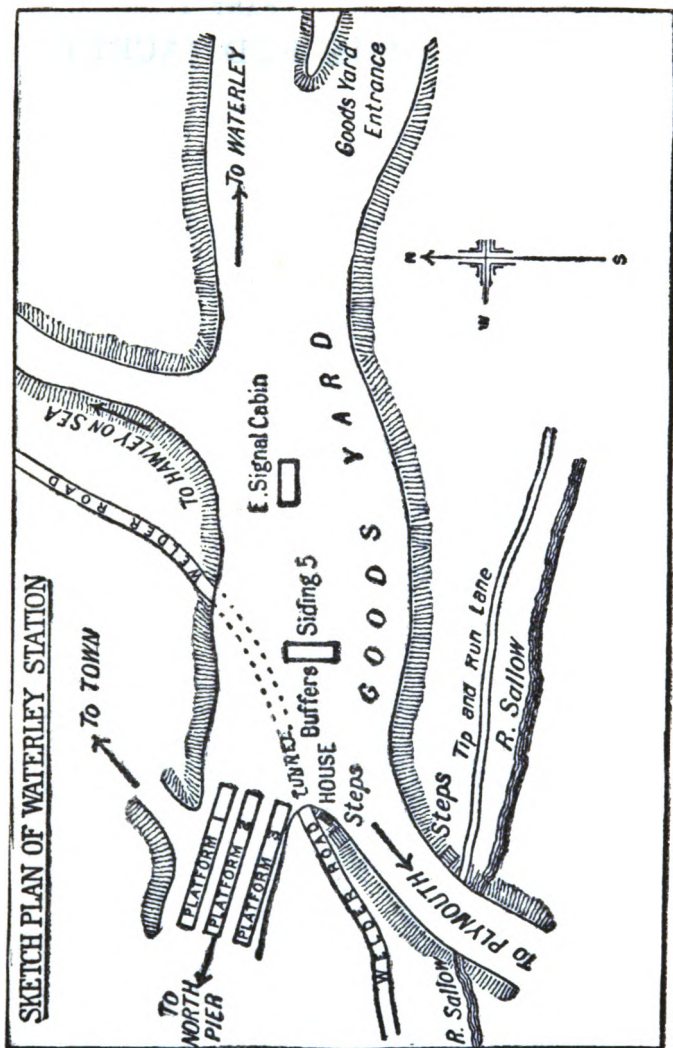
On that day he had received a telephone message requesting him to see Mr. Cavendish at the Home Office on November 9th. On the latter date he had seen Mr. Cavendish and been requested to forget anything he had ever previously read or heard of the Ireland case. It was Mr. Cavendish's desire that he would peruse certain statements collected at different times and places from the various persons directly connected with the tragedy. He was then to deliver to Mr. Cavendish a considered opinion upon those statements and the inferences to be drawn from them. Subsequently he was to be asked to take such action as might

be considered advisable and as Mr. Cavendish, under instruction, might commission him to perform.

Under what circumstances the statements had been collected, Mr. Cavendish did not say.¹ He conveyed, however, that the examining authority had been one more formal than the ordinary routine police investigation: that two very distinguished counsel had been employed to examine the witnesses, and that the witnesses also had had the assistance of counsel no less distinguished. The statements had not been made on oath, however, and had been taken on various dates and in various places. And in the examination of the witnesses, as Gore was to discover, the strict letter of the English Law of Evidence had not always been adhered to. So much, under the seal of the most solemn secrecy, Gore had learned. On the afternoon of November 11th, he sat down to the perusal of the contents of the red jacket with a mind as unprejudiced, as impartial, and as blank as he could contrive to make it.

¹ For the reassurance of the reader suspicious of leading questions and of other legal irregularities, it ought to be stated that subsequently Mr. Cavendish was at pains to insist that these statements were merely police "interrogatories"; but that, owing to "special considerations," the persons interrogated and the police had the assistance of Counsel. The statements were taken at different times and in different places, *not* on oath. Mr. Cavendish was careful always to insist that nothing in the nature of a "Trial" had ever been contemplated or had ever taken place.

PART II
THE RED JACKET



THE RED JACKET

Martin Prettyman, 34, signalman, Shenstone Station.
—On the evening of October 28th last the 7.15 from Waterley for North Pier was three minutes late at Shenstone. It was due there at 7.29. It arrived at 7.32. The 28th of October was a Wednesday. I watched the train pass my cabin going into the station.

Did you notice whether the blinds of any of the compartments of the last coach were drawn down ?

Yes. All three blinds of the third compartment from the front of the last coach were drawn down. I do not think that any of the blinds of any of the other compartments were down. The corridor passage of the last coach, which was the slip-carriage taken on at Waterley, would have been on the side farthest away from me.

What sort of an evening was it ?

Fine but dark, and foggy at times. There was a sharp frost falling about that time of the evening. I could see into the three other compartments of the rear carriage, but it was too foggy to make out the faces of the passengers in them. I could see them pretty distinctly, but not to recognise them now. There was a lady and a gentleman in the first compartment. By first compartment, I mean the first compartment reckoning from the end nearest the engine. The order of the compartments was—1st, a third class ; 2nd, a third class ; 3rd, a first class ; 4th, a third class.

What were they doing when the train passed your cabin ?

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The gentleman was standing and bending down over the lady. She was half-sitting and half-lying on the seat. He seemed to have to hold her up. She was on the seat at the far side of the carriage, with her back to the engine—the side next the corridor passage.

Did you see anyone in the second compartment ?

I did not notice anyone there.

The blinds of the third compartment were down. Did you see anyone in the fourth compartment ?

Yes—a man—on the window-seat, facing the engine, with his feet upon the cushion.

You did not recognise any of these three passengers.

No. I guessed that Sir William Ireland was in the first-class compartment. I knew he generally came back by that train in the evening from Westpool, if he had gone up by train. I made a note of everything I had noticed immediately I heard of his being murdered that evening, not more than half an hour later. There were four coaches in the train.

Thomas Pilker, 29, porter, Shenstone Station.—On the evening of October 28th last I was on the platform of Shenstone Station when the train leaving Waterley at 7.15 for North Pier came in. That was at 7.32. It was three minutes late that evening. I opened the door of the first-class compartment of the slip-coach. I saw——

When you say the “slip-coach,” you mean the carriage slipped at Waterley by the London train leaving Paddington at 3.45 p.m.

Yes. That train gets to Westpool at 6.5 p.m. It leaves Westpool at 6.22 and gets to Waterley at 6.57. That is a non-stop run. At Waterley the slip-carriage is run into a siding. It is picked up there and joined on to a train that comes up from Plymouth by Exeter and Baynham. That train goes on from Waterley to

North Pier. The London train goes down to Plymouth by Baynham and Exeter. It leaves Waterley at 7.10.

Shenstone is the first station between Waterley and North Pier. It is a run of seven miles; the train takes fourteen minutes. I do not know why the train was late that evening at Shenstone. I expect on account of the fog. The slip-coach was at the rear of the train with the three other coaches in front of it.

You opened the door of the first-class compartment of the end carriage first?

Yes. Before I opened it I noticed that all the blinds were down—that is, the blinds of the compartment itself—not those on the outside of the corridor passage. They were not drawn down.

You opened the door of the compartment. Tell us what you saw.

I saw Sir William Ireland sitting in a corner—the corner facing the engine next the corridor passage and the platform. At first I thought he was asleep, because he didn't move when I stood there for a moment or two. There was a newspaper on his lap. I said, "Shenstone, sir," and reached into the carriage to take his attaché-case and umbrella from the seat opposite him. Then I thought he looked queer somehow, and I saw some blood on his newspaper. I couldn't see his face, because his hat was over his eyes, so I touched his arm and said, "Shenstone, sir," again. But he didn't move, and I pushed his hat back so as I could see his face. I saw blood on his shoulder and collar and all over the cushion and his overcoat. I got out of the carriage and saw Lady Ireland on the platform, with Captain Ingoldsby trying to bring her to.

On the platform?

Yes.

Captain Ingoldsby and she had been in one of the compartments of the same carriage when the train came in ?

I can't say of my own knowledge as to that. I believe so. I heard afterwards——

Don't tell us what you heard afterwards. Captain Ingoldsby and Lady Ireland were on the platform, and he was trying to bring her to. Was she standing or sitting down ?

He was holding her up and asking Gannett, the other porter, to get some water.

Was the door of any of the other three compartments open then ?

There were the two outer doors of the carriage, and the four inner doors of the four compartments. I believe they were all open then. Gannett opened the inner door of the end compartment, where Mr. Theobald was. I said : " Never mind that. Sir William's here dead, with his throat cut by the look of it. Go and get the stationmaster." Gannett went and fetched Mr. Pedler, the stationmaster. While he was doing that I woke up Mr. Theobald again.

He had fallen asleep again ?

Yes. When the stationmaster came, I went into the first-class compartment again with him. He looked at Sir William, and then he told me to go and ring up the police station and Dr. Maudesley.

Before you went to do that, did you see Gannett find something in the carriage ?

Yes. He looked under the seat opposite Sir William, because I saw more blood there. He went on his knees and felt about, and found a knife stuck in behind the heating apparatus with blood all over it. The blood was still wet.

Is this the knife ? (*Exhibit 3 shown to witness.*)

Yes.

While this was going on, where were Captain Ingoldsby and Lady Ireland ?

In the waiting-room.

Did either of them come to the compartment where Sir William was ?

No. Neither of them made any remark about him that I heard ; except Captain Ingoldsby kept on asking for water.

Then you went and telephoned the police and Dr. Maudesley ?

Yes. When I first saw Sir William, he was sitting upright in the corner seat next the platform, facing the engine. I touched him. I did not meaningly alter his position. He slipped forward a little. When I saw all that blood, I wanted to see where it came from, so I moved him a little. I was careful not to touch the blood. I moved him very little.

A good deal, I suggest.

No. He slipped forward a little, and settled down sideways along the seat.

Cross-examined.—You opened the first-class compartment first ?

Yes. I had no particular reason for doing so more than that we usually open the first-class compartment doors first, if there are any first-class passengers.

The first-class passengers are first served, eh ? You find them more liberal in the matter of tips ?

Not in these times.

In this case you knew that there was a first-class passenger—or more than one ?

Yes. I knew that Sir William and Lady Ireland would be on that train.

How ? Did Sir William usually go up to Westpool by train ?

Sometimes. He went mostly by car, but he often went by train. If he did, he nearly always came back

by that train, the 7.29. That morning I had heard from Sir William's chauffeur, Hopgood, when he left Sir William at the station for the 9.5 up, that Sir William would come back that evening by the 7.29.

So that there were at all events two people who expected Sir William to be in that train that evening—you and Sir William's chauffeur. Do you know of any other person who might have expected that?

Well, there might have been several as would know, it being usual for Sir William to come back by that train.

Did you, personally, tell anyone during that day that Sir William would return by that train?

Yes. I told the stationmaster, and Gannett, the other porter. I also mentioned it to Mr. Rutley, the booking-clerk. I believe I also mentioned it to my wife, when I went home to my dinner. Her brother-in-law and his wife were there at the time, so they may have heard.

Anyone else?

Not that I can say for certain. I may have mentioned it to people on the platform during the day, chatting to them.

At any rate, you told six people that Sir William would return by that train that evening. When Henry Hopgood, Sir William's chauffeur, told you that morning that he expected his master back by that train in the evening, did any other person besides yourself hear what he said?

They may have, by a coincidence.

Where did he tell you?

Outside the station, where his car was. Sir William had gone into the station. There were a good few people about in front of the station, in and out, waiting for the 9.5. It was the first useful train from North Pier to Waterley that stopped at Shenstone.

How many? A dozen?

Maybe more, or maybe not so many. Any of them might have heard what Hopgood said. He has a clear voice, but nothing extra. I don't suppose people were listening to what he said.

At any rate, possibly all these twelve people may have heard what he said. Twelve and six make eighteen. Any of those eighteen may have told another eighteen people during the day. You understand that a great many people may have known that Sir William was returning by that train—perhaps a hundred people—perhaps more?

I have no knowledge as to that.

You have known Henry Hopgood for some time?

About four years. Since he came to Sir William's service.

You know him well?

Oh, nothing extra.

You are on good terms with him?

Me?

Yes, you. Answer the question, please.

Yes, I'm on good speaking terms with him.

You have had no quarrel with him?

No. No quarrel.

There was a dispute between you, wasn't there, a couple of weeks before this—October 13th, to be exact—an argument about putting a trunk of Lady Ireland's into the car. He thought it was your business to do it. There was an argument—a pretty angry one, wasn't there?

Nothing angry to talk of. Just a word or two.

You know a young woman called Phoebe Carr?

Yes.

You had been at this time in the habit of walking out with her?

Yes. Sometimes.

Regularly, I suggest. But about this time there had

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been a coolness. She had taken to walking out with someone else ?

Sometimes, she might.

Regularly, I suggest.

Well, if you like.

I don't like. She had begun to walk out regularly with Hopgood, hadn't she ?

Yes. Pretty often.

You had quarrelled with her ?

Yes.

Violently ?

There was no violence. No man ever knew me to show violence to a woman.

You threatened to be even with Hopgood ?

I may have. I was angry, as I might be, seeing I was as good as married to her.

Since that you had not spoken to Hopgood until the morning of October 28th, when he drove his master to Shenstone Station ?

No.

You're sure that he spoke to you then ?

Yes. I'm sure.

And that he told you that Sir William would return by the 7.29 ?

Yes.

I put it to you that he did not speak to you, or you to him, that morning ?

He spoke to me right enough. There's plenty can say so.

Who can say ?

Those as was standing about. I can't tell you their names.

Thomas Gannett, 26, porter, Shenstone Station.—I was on the platform of Shenstone Station on the evening of October 28th last, when the 7.29 from Waterley

came in. She was three minutes behind time. I opened the doors of the compartments of the carriage next the engine, and then those of the second coach. Very few passengers got out of these carriages—about seven, I think. Wednesday is the market-day in Waterley, but most of the people from Shenstone had come back by the 5.10. No one got out of the third carriage. I saw a lady and a gentleman getting out of the slip-coach—Lady Ireland and Captain Ingoldsby.

Out of which compartment of the slip-coach?

Of the first compartment, I believe.

Did you notice anything about the appearance of the lady?

Yes. She appeared in a weak condition, and the gentleman had to hold her up. He called out to me to get her some water, as he was taking her into the waiting-room. I saw then that he was Captain Ingoldsby, and that the lady was Lady Ireland. Pilker, the other porter, called me to the slip-coach. I opened the inner door of the end third-class compartment and woke up the passenger who was in it, Mr. Theobald, Sir William Ireland's agent.

He was asleep?

Yes.

Was he sober?

I couldn't say.

Did he appear sober?

Not very.

Not very? Did his voice sound as if he were quite sober?

No. I think he was a bit fuddled, by the way he looked at me.

Mr. Theobald very often has to be wakened up at Shenstone Station?

Witness (smiling).—Pretty often.

And very often he is fuddled?

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Very often.

What happened then ?

He opened his hand, and his ticket was in it. He had nothing else in his hand. He had a newspaper, but it was on the floor. I took his ticket. I think I put it into my pocket. Pilker said : " Leave that alone," or " Never mind that. Here's Sir William's throat has been cut. Go quick and get Mr. Pedler." I went and fetched Mr. Pedler, the stationmaster, and he came back with me, and examined Sir William. He said : " My God, the man is dead ! He's been murdered."

In what position was Sir William when you saw him ?

He was lying over on his side along the cushion.

In a corner of the carriage ?

Yes. Facing the engine, next the platform.

You found something under the opposite seat, the seat nearer the engine ?

Yes. I found a pocket-knife hidden behind the heating apparatus.

What made you look for it there ?

Pilker saw some blood under that seat, so I went down on my knees to look, and saw the handle of the knife sticking out a little.

There was blood on the knife ?

Yes. Some.

Is this the knife ? (*Exhibit 3 shown to witness.*)

Yes.

What happened then ?

Mr. Pedler sent Pilker to telephone for the police and the doctor. The slip-coach, with the body in it, was shunted into a siding, so as the rest of the train could go on to North Pier.

When the train came in you opened the doors of the first carriage. Quickly, I suppose. Did you have time to see what Pilker was doing ?

I knew he was at the slip-coach.

Did you see him open the door ?

No. I wasn't looking his way.

About how long after the train stopped was it that Pilker called you to the slip-coach ?

A minute or two.

Two minutes ?

Maybe a little longer.

Three minutes ?

Yes. Say three minutes.

The slip-coach did not pass you, as you stood on the platform when the train came in ?

No. I was too high up.

Did you notice anything about Lady Ireland's appearance as she went towards the waiting-room ?

Yes. She looked very weak and faint. Her eyes were shut.

Did you hear Captain Ingoldsby say anything to her ?

Yes. He said, " Be brave, darling," and he asked me to get water.

Did you expect Sir William Ireland to return by that train to Shenstone ?

Yes. Pilker told me that he would be back by that train in the evening.

Do you remember the afternoon of October 13th last ?

Witness (consulting notebook).—Is it about the row between—— ?

There was a row between Pilker and someone that afternoon, outside the station ?

Yes. With Hopgood, Sir William's chauffeur. It was about putting Lady Ireland's suit-case into her car.

Was it much of a row ?

Oh, well—they barged at one another a bit.

Pilker has a hot temper ?

When he's vexed.

Hopgood had brought the car several times to the

station, I presume, between October 13th and October 28th ?

Yes. Nearly every day—to collect parcels for Shenstone Castle.

In that interval did you ever see or hear him speak to Pilker ?

Witness (hesitating).—I couldn't say. I mind my own business.

Answer the question, please. Did you see or hear them speak to one another during that period ?

No.

Has Hopgood a loud speaking voice ?

Yes—very strong, when he wants to make himself heard.

Carry your mind back to the morning of October 28th. When the 9.5 was due on that morning, did you see Pilker on the up-platform ?

No.

Do you know where he was ?

Yes. Outside the station, bringing in luggage from a taxi.

You saw him doing this ?

Yes. You can see over the wicket-gate from the platform.

Did you see Sir William Ireland's car ?

Yes.

Did you see Pilker speaking to Hopgood ?

Yes.

How far were you from them ?

About as far as you'd chuck a penny.

And you saw them talking together ?

Not talking together, but just saying a word to one another in passing.

John Pedler, V.C., 51, stationmaster, Shenstone.—On the evening of Wednesday, October 28th last, I was in

my office when the 7.29 from Waterley came in. It was three minutes behind time that evening. Gannett, the porter, came into the office and asked me to go to the slip-carriage at the end of the train. He said that Sir William Ireland had been murdered in the train. I went at once. I saw Sir William, half lying on the cushion, half sitting. I saw there was a lot of blood on his neck and his overcoat and the cushion behind him. I looked into his face, and I saw he was dead. I sent Pilker, the other porter, to telephone for the police and Dr. Maudesley. I locked the slip-carriage and had it shunted into a siding, sending on the rest of the train to North Pier.

When you were going to the slip-carriage, from your office, did you see Lady Ireland and Captain Ingoldsby on the platform ?

No. They had gone into the waiting-room.

Did you see any person in any of the other compartments of the slip-carriage ?

Mr. Theobald. He was in the last compartment—a third-class one. It took some time to get him out.

Why ?

Well, I don't like to say it of a gentleman, but he was a bit the worse for drink.

You had known him arrive at the station in that condition before ?

Yes, I'm sorry to say.

What did he do when you got him out ?

When he heard that Sir William was dead, he went away out of the station—I suppose home to his house. I did not see him again that night.

Did he say anything when you told him that Sir William was dead ?

Yes. He said : " A good riddance of bad rubbish." I said : " You oughtn't to speak like that of a murdered man, Mr. Theobald." He said nothing more, but went

away, although some of the other passengers who had got out told him he ought to wait for the police.

When the carriage had been shunted into the siding, what did you do ?

I went into the waiting-room to talk to Captain Ingoldsby and Lady Ireland.

Alone ?

Yes. I shut the door.

Tell us what happened then ?

Lady Ireland fainted, and Captain Ingoldsby turned on me and told me to go to the devil—that I had frightened Lady Ireland by coming in suddenly and locking the door. I said I knew my duty and must do it. He turned his back on me. Neither of them spoke to me when I asked if they knew anything about how the murder had been committed. The police came then, and I went out and reported to Sergeant Ryder what had happened, as far as I knew it.

Do you suggest that you had any right to question Captain Ingoldsby or Lady Ireland ?—or that they had no right to refuse to answer ?

As stationmaster, I considered I was responsible for getting all the information possible at once.

You acted with the utmost prudence. But you realise now, don't you, that you had no more authority to collect evidence from Captain Ingoldsby than he had to collect it from you ?

Oh, well, authority—no. I don't say I had any authority, except being the responsible official of the Company.

However, you don't suggest that Captain Ingoldsby or Lady Ireland endeavoured in any way to put any difficulty in the way of collecting information, when the responsible people—the police—attempted to collect it ?

Oh no.

Had you been on the platform of the station when the 9.5 a.m. up-train for Waterley was due that morning?

No. I was in my office until the train was due to leave.

There is a window in your office?

Yes. It looks out on the front of the station.

Did you see the porter, Pilker, outside the station, bringing in some luggage from a taxi?

Yes.

Did you see Sir William Ireland's car?

Yes.

Did you see Pilker speak to Hopgood, Sir William's chauffeur?

No. He may have spoken to him without my seeing him.

Do you remember an incident on the afternoon of October 13th, outside the station, in which Pilker and Hopgood were concerned?

Yes. There was a bit of a rumpus about a suitcase. They had some words.

A serious quarrel?

No, not serious, just a dispute.

They both used bad language?

Oh, well, that's common enough nowadays, without meaning a great deal.

Between October 13th and October 28th had you ever seen or heard Pilker and Hopgood talk to one another?

Not that I remember.

The slip-carriage was not connected with the rest of the train by a bridge?

No. It was a corridor-carriage. But there was no passage between it and the rest of the train.

Before you locked-up the slip-coach, did you make search to discover whether there were any other blood-stains in any other place?

Yes. We found none, except under the seat opposite Sir William, and the blood where he sat, and some slight marks along the corridor and in the first compartment.

What do you mean by slight marks ?

Well, you could just make out that there were the marks of blood. They looked to me like the marks made by boots or shoes that had walked in blood.

You have a niece named Phœbe Carr ?

Yes.

She lives with you and your wife in your quarters over the booking-office at Shenstone Station ?

Yes.

Prior to the beginning of October last, she and Pilker, the porter, had been what is called walking out, hadn't they ?

Yes.

That stopped suddenly, about the beginning of October ?

So I have heard since. I never paid much attention to these affairs of my niece's. There was a fresh young man on tap every time she went to a dance. There was never anything serious with Pilker, I'm sure of that, if that's what you mean ?

However, she dropped Pilker about the beginning of October, and took up with someone else ?

Perhaps so. I've heard talk.

You don't know of your own knowledge ?

No.

You are short-sighted ?

Yes. My eyes were damaged by gas in 1917.

Sergeant James Ryder, Westshire Constabulary.—I have been stationed at Shenstone for the past two years. At 7.37 p.m. on the evening of October 28th last, I received a telephone call from Shenstone Railway

Station. In consequence of what was said to me over the telephone, I proceeded at once with Constable William Ludlow, K. 72, to the station. There I saw the slip-carriage which had been detached from the North Pier train and run into a siding. The porter, Thomas Gannett, was in charge of it. All the doors were locked. The stationmaster unlocked them when I arrived. In the third compartment of the carriage from the front, I saw Sir William Ireland. I made a plan of the carriage with accurate measurements. (*Witness shown Exhibit 1.*) That is the plan I made. The marks in red pencil indicate where I found traces of blood.

There are marks in red pencil on the cushions and the floor of the third compartment, and also under the seat opposite Sir William's. There are none in the second compartment. But along the corridor passage and in the first compartment, there are red dots here and there?

Those were slight marks of blood. In some cases they were only visible through a powerful glass. Later that evening I examined them through a glass.

What impression did you form with regard to them?

I am of opinion that they were made by blood adhering to the soles of boots or shoes.

Were the marks sufficiently clear to indicate the direction in which the boots or shoes which had made them had been moving?

Yes. One set, made by a small shoe, were in my opinion made by feet moving from the third compartment along the corridor and into the first compartment. The second set, made by larger feet, appeared to have been made by boots moving both from the third compartment to the first, and from the first compartment to the third. I am of opinion that in both cases the blood had been picked up from the floor of the compartment in which Sir William was.

S.-C.M.

e

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There are no red dots in the last compartment ?

I found none there.

You were present while Dr. Maudesley made his examination ?

Yes. In consequence of what he said I reported the matter to Inspector Kaye at Waterley. The body was taken to the mortuary chapel in Shenstone churchyard, and remained there that night. It was removed next day to the estate office, where it remained until the inquest.

Did you have any conversation with Mr. Theobald on that evening ?

Yes. At his house in Shenstone.

At what time ?

About 8.30 p.m.

Was he sober then ?

I should say he had been drinking a good deal. But he was not intoxicated. I also saw Lady Ireland, Captain Ingoldsby and Mr. Burchall that evening at Shenstone Castle.

Constable William Ludlow, Westshire Constabulary.—(*Shown Exhibit 1.*) This is the plan made by Sergeant Ryder on the evening of October 28th. I checked his measurements. I also checked the red marks indicating where blood was found.

Sergeant Ryder (recalled).—I made search for a covering of brown paper, such as would have covered the knife found by Thomas Gannett, both in the carriage itself, and along the line between Waterley and Shenstone. It was not found.

John Pedler (recalled).—(*Shown Exhibit 15.*) I recognise this piece of string. It is made in a peculiar way, three colours interwoven. I found it on the floor of Sir William's compartment, near his feet, which were

up on the seat. I did not see any covering of brown paper such as might have covered the knife found by Gannett. I searched the carriage thoroughly from end to end before it was locked and moved into the siding.

Thomas Pilker (recalled).—I did not see any covering of brown paper in any of the compartments of the carriage. I saw Mr. Pedler pick up this piece of string. (*Shown Exhibit 15.*)

Inspector Walter Kaye, Westshire Constabulary, Waterley.—At 9.30 on the evening of October 28th last I received a telephone message from Sergeant Ryder. I at once proceeded to Shenstone, where I made certain inquiries.

Did you see Mr. Theobald at any time that night ?

Yes. About eleven o'clock.

Was he sober then ?

Quite, I should say. He may have been drinking during the day, but he was then perfectly sober.

Claude Robert Theobald, 53.—I am the agent to the Shenstone Castle estate. I have held that position since the year 1908. I was first appointed to it by the late Lord Peter Pakenham. Upon his death, two years later, the estate was purchased by Sir William Ireland. He was then Mr. William Ireland. I retained my position as agent.

You were on very intimate terms with the late Lord Peter Pakenham ?

Yes. We had been at Winchester and through the South African War together. He treated me exactly as a personal friend.

You found your position somewhat altered under the new conditions—after the purchase of the estate by Mr. Ireland ?

Mr. Ireland was a business man. His idea of an estate was that it was a business out of which something was to be made—as much as possible, in money and in social advantage. From that point of view, he was the best landed proprietor I have ever known.

He allowed you much less liberty and initiative ?

Yes. That is the case.

And expected far more from you ?

I cannot say what he expected. I can say that what he got was always the best I could give him. What he really wanted was not an estate-agent but a miracle-worker. I admit that I am not that.

Will you tell us what you remember of the events of October 28th last ?

On the morning of that day I went up to Waterley from Shenstone in the car——

That is the car of which you had the sole use, as estate-agent ?

Yes. The car was not running well, and I took it up to the agents from whom it had been bought, Messrs. Appleby, in the Cornmarket. I left the car there to be overhauled, and then attended to some estate business and some business of my own in the town. A little before lunch-time I called at the offices of Ireland & Bunton's Brick and Tile Works. It was one of the businesses in which Sir William was interested ; he was a director of the Company. There I saw Mr. Summerton, the manager, and asked him to come and lunch with me at the Club. During lunch he surprised me by asking me what the trouble was now with Sir William. I said that I knew of no particular trouble except that rain *would* kill young partridges if they got enough of it. We had been trying to rear partridges on the moors and had got bad results, owing to the heavy rains all during the year. Mr. Summerton said then that he had heard that Sir William had decided

to dismiss me from my post as agent, and appoint someone else.

You were surprised to hear that ?

I was amazed. I had held the position for nearly eighteen years, and had always got on with Sir William pretty well. I said that I could not understand it, and that there must be some mistake.

You had had no idea whatever, until then, that Sir William was thinking of dismissing you ?

None whatever.

Had you seen or heard anything to indicate that any other person was being considered by Sir William or held specially in his view, in connection with estate business ?

No. Mr. Summerton would not tell me who was his informant, nor who the person was who was to be appointed in my place. But he told me in confidence that Sir William had complained to several people, including himself, that I was old-fashioned and slow in my methods, that I was always going sick, and that I drank more than was good for me.

Your health had not been good for some years before that ?

I got enteric out in South Africa, and have never been a first-class life since. I have suffered from gout.

Is there any truth that you habitually drink more than is good for you ?

Not that I am aware of. I cannot say that I know how much drink is good for me. I am quite sure that I have never drunk more than the average man does under the average circumstances.

What did you have to drink at lunch with Mr. Summerton that day, for instance ?

I had a sherry-and-bitters, a large whisky-and soda—we divided a bottle of port, and afterwards I believe we had another small whisky.

You were greatly disturbed by what Mr. Summerton told you ?

Naturally. I was fifty-three years of age, and at fifty-three years of age I stood no earthly chance, I knew, of obtaining other employment if I lost my post. My private means are very small.

Did you use this phrase to Mr. Summerton : " I'll put the kibosh on this old blackguard. I know something that will make him think before he does things to me in a hurry ? "

Yes. I may have said something of the sort. It was not said very seriously.

Did you seriously mean that you possessed any information about Sir William which could be brought to bear upon him so as to affect his conduct towards you ?

No. I was annoyed, and no doubt said more than I meant.

You decided then to go up and see Sir William at Westpool ?

Yes. I knew that I should find him at the Foundry—that is, Messrs. Ireland & Sons, East Road, Westpool. He was the senior partner of that firm. I saw Sir William in his office at the Foundry that afternoon.

What time was that ?

Some time after three o'clock. He kept me waiting a long time.

You saw him alone ?

No. His secretary, Mr. Carmichael, was in the room.

What passed between you ?

I asked him if it was true that he intended to dismiss me. He said, " Yes." I asked for what reason. He gave me the reasons which Summerton had given me already. He said that I hadn't given him satisfaction for several years, that I was always knocked up, that I was getting too old and slow for this work, and that

I drank too much. His manner was most offensive, but I saw that he was not at all well that day, and that he looked greatly worried. I tried to keep my temper and keep things as smooth as possible. However, he refused to discuss the matter with me, or even to look at me, for that matter, and said that his mind was made up. I asked him then if it had gone so far that he had someone else in view as my successor. He said that that was no affair of mine. That seemed to me a grotesquely uncivil answer, and I admit that I lost my temper. After eighteen years of service it seemed to me a hard and most unjust thing to turn a man of fifty-three out of his post, without giving him at least some warning, and a chance to make any alteration in his methods that would make things seem satisfactory to his employer. He swore at me and told me to go to the devil, that he was sick of me and my "boozing friends," and that I might consider myself dismissed as from the 1st of the following January, with six months' salary as a consolation. He took out his cheque-book and began to write a cheque for me, as much as to imply that if I had any decency I'd clear out of the job on the spot. I told him that he could keep his money, and that I hoped his God would treat him as he had treated me. I used the phrase speaking in a general way. I was very worked up and angry, as was natural.

I put it to you that the phrase used by you was, "I hope your God, who knows what I know about you, will treat you as you are treating me"?

I may have put it that way. If so, it was in a general way only.

I must press this point. It is the truth that you had been in the habit of drinking a good deal of late years?

Nothing to interfere with my work. I had never

missed a whole day's work—except during my holidays, of course, or by special permission—once during all the years I had held the position.

But there were many periods, were there not, during which your attention to your duties for the day consisted merely in coming downstairs from your bedroom to your sitting-room, in dressing-gown and slippers, for half an hour or so ?

There were days when I could hardly walk. There are plenty of them still.

You were—and are—in the habit of spending your evenings at the Shenstone Arms, were you not ?

Yes.

With friends who are well known in Shenstone as hard drinkers ?

There are a lot of mealy-mouthed gossips in Shenstone—like everywhere else.

But there have been many occasions on which you have had to be assisted home to your house ?

That may have occurred sometimes.

On some occasions you have had to sleep at the Shenstone Arms ?

Once. I suppose a man is at liberty to sleep where he pleases, even in England.

On July 24th last you were fined £3 and costs for being in charge of a motor-car while drunk in Shenstone High Street. Your licence was endorsed ?

Yes, by a pair of thick-skulled Communist J.P.'s, who can't spell the word " licence " correctly.

What did you do on the afternoon of October 28th last, after leaving Sir William Ireland's office at the Foundry at Westpool ?

I walked about the city. I was greatly disturbed in my mind. I may have had some drinks. Yes. I know a man called Peddy. He is a veterinary surgeon. I met him that afternoon with some friends of his and

he took me to a club—the Grenville Club, behind Queen's Road.

That was another favourite haunt of yours, whenever you paid a visit to Westpool ?

It is a perfectly respectable place. One might as well say that a church or a chapel or a Turkish bath was a "favourite haunt" of someone. I went there sometimes.

You had some drinks there ?

One or two.

Was there any conversation between you and Peddy and your other friends there with regard to your losing your post ?

There may have been. Yes. There was. I may have used strong language concerning Sir William Ireland.

Threatening language ?

I may have spoken violently. I was in a very agitated frame of mind ?

You played poker that afternoon with Peddy and his friends ?

Yes. I believe so.

They are experienced players ?

Everyone who plays poker is an experienced player. Experience is not necessarily a profitable acquirement.

You won thirty pounds ?

I won some money. I cannot say how much precisely.

Your mind was sufficiently clear to enable you to win thirty pounds from these experienced players ?

I am always lucky at cards.

Did you say to Peddy : " For two pins I'd put a dose of lead into the old pig. That would stop his little games for him " ?

No. Not that I remember. What I do remember is that I got a bad earache while we were playing cards.

Did you use any words to the effect that a dose of lead would stop Sir William Ireland from doing anything ?

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No. Not that I remember. I left the Grenville Club about six o'clock and walked down to Cross Street Terminus and caught the 6.22 for Waterley.

Before you left the Grenville Club did you use the telephone?

Yes. I rang up Appleby's, the garage in Waterley where I had left my car. I spoke to the manager. He told me that the car would be ready to take away any time that evening up to 9 o'clock, but I said that I should leave it there that night as it was so cold and foggy.

Did you speak to anyone else over the phone?

Yes. Beechinor, my man—or rather my odd man. He was at the garage when I rang up. I had arranged with him to ring up a little before six o'clock to find out whether the trouble in the car's ignition had been put right. I told him that I should not take the car back to Shenstone that night. He said that, in that case, he would go up to Westpool for the evening and have a run round there. I said, "All right." He is not a whole-time servant of mine. I employ him to wash the car and do odd jobs for me. Sometimes, if I want the car brought back from anywhere, I take him along.

What time was it when you spoke to him?

A little after five o'clock. Not long after. About ten minutes past five.

Did Beechinor say by what train he intended to travel up to Westpool?

Yes. He said he would try to catch the 5.20 at Waterley.

At what time would that train get to Westpool?

It takes ordinarily about forty-five minutes. He was on the platform at Westpool when I got there to catch my train, the 6.22. His train had just come in. I think that was about ten minutes past six.

I want to get this quite clear, please. You left the

Grenville club about six, and walked down to Cross Street Terminus. You reached there about ten minutes past six, and on the platform you met Beechinor, who had just got out of the train in which he had travelled up from Waterley ?

Yes.

Had you arranged to meet him there ?

No.

Had you known that you probably would meet him there ?

I had not thought about it.

You had some conversation with him there ?

Yes. I told him that Sir William had dismissed me. He said nothing much, except that he was sorry, and that it was a shame. We separated then, and I went across to the down platform for my train. I did not see him again that night.

Did he say anything to you to lead you to believe that he had changed his mind about staying in Westpool for the evening ?

No. There was no reason why he should change his mind.

You then went to No. 4 platform to wait for your train ?

Yes. I waited there in the waiting-room for most of the time. I am sure that I did not see Beechinor on No. 4 platform.

This man Beechinor had been in trouble the preceding winter ?

There had been trouble, yes, with the keepers on the Duke's estate. I do not know that Beechinor has always been a confirmed poacher. I have no doubt that, like every reasonable person, he thought that if there were thousands of rabbits running about eating up His Grace's greenery, one here or there wouldn't be missed. I have no definite information as to what

occurred on the night of November 14th, 1924. I don't think anyone has. I know that Beechinor got well peppered by someone, and that one of His Grace's keepers got it in the leg, and that the magistrates dismissed the case.

It was shortly after this that you began to employ Beechinor?

Yes. He came to me and told me that he wanted to settle down and stay at home of nights, and asked me if I could get him a pound a week to live on. He said no one would employ him, because everyone was afraid of the old Duke. His wife had just had her fifth child. I took him on as maid-of-all-work. He's a capital fellow, and works harder when he's had a pint than when he's thinking of having one.

I must ask you to answer my questions seriously, please. To your knowledge, to the knowledge of every person in Shenstone, this man shot at and wounded a keeper who had caught him in the act of poaching. He is a determined, powerful, young man.

Oh yes, he's a fine stout fellow.

He regards himself, no doubt, as being under a very considerable obligation to you for employing him?

I have no idea. If he does, he's the only grateful person I've ever known in my life.

You are still certain that you did not see him on No. 4 platform at Cross Street Terminus that evening?

Absolutely certain. I waited most of the time in the waiting-room, then I walked about the platform until it was time to get into my carriage.

That was the carriage at the end of the train—the slip-carriage for North Pier, which was to be slipped at Waterley and attached there to a North Pier train?

Yes.

Only passengers intending to go on to North Pier would get into that carriage?

Quite, as the slip-carriage would not go actually into the station at Waterley.

Was there any passenger in the carriage when you got into it ?

Yes. I saw Sir William and Lady Ireland in the first-class compartment.

How many first-class compartments were there in the carriage ?

One only. The other three were third class. I had a first-class ticket, but I took a seat in a third-class compartment—the end one.

Why did you not go into the first-class compartment, with a first-class ticket ?

I didn't want to come into collision with Sir William again that evening.

It would not have been necessary to come into collision with him, merely because you took a seat in the same compartment with him ?

I felt that it was wiser, and more comfortable for all parties, not to travel for over an hour in the same carriage with him.

Did Sir William see you as you entered the carriage ?

No.

Did Lady Ireland see you get in ?

No. They were both reading newspapers. I passed on to the end compartment. Lady Ireland was sitting on the same side as Sir William, facing the engine, in the corner farthest from the platform.

She did not look up from her newspaper as you passed the door of the compartment ?

No.

Was it open ?

No. It was shut.

Were the blinds of the first-class compartment drawn down then ?

No. I think not. Some of them may have been,

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but not on the side next the corridor passage, because I could see into the compartment. I saw no one else in either of the two compartments in front of the first-class compartment. But I did not look attentively. There might have been some in either of them.

You cannot be more definite ?

If I could, I should be. I don't go about counting the number of people on 'bus-tops or in railway carriages. I am being as definite as I consider consistent with speaking the truth. I have said all this before about a dozen times—at the Inquest and elsewhere.

Did you see Captain Ingoldsby on the platform at Cross Street ?

I did not see Captain Ingoldsby anywhere that evening. I did not trouble whether anyone else got into the carriage. I am certain no one else got into my compartment at any rate. I had an evening paper. I read for a little while, after the train started, and I must have fallen asleep. I remember looking down the racing news and beginning to read about a flying accident. After that I remember nothing until I was awakened by a porter at Shenstone.

You ask us seriously to believe that ?

No. I merely answer the question put to me.

From Westpool to Waterley that train travelled at a high speed—over fifty miles an hour. You did not notice its speed or the noise it made ?

No. One doesn't.

Thirty-five minutes later that speed slackened suddenly, and the noise died away completely. You did not notice that ?

No.

The slip-carriage came to rest, after jolting over a number of points, against buffers in a siding at Waterley. The contact is very gentle, but quite noticeable. You did not notice it ?

No.

Presently—after a wait of eighteen minutes, an engine was attached to the carriage. You did not notice that ?

No.

The carriage was drawn out of the siding, shunted to the back of a train, coupled on there. The train started off. It bumped over points. Its engine whistled. You did not notice any of these things ?

No.

You heard no noise whatever in your sleep—no cry or call of any kind ?

No. I am a very sound sleeper.

You did not leave your compartment from the time when the carriage left Westpool, at 6.22, until it arrived at Shenstone at 7.32 ?

No.

You cannot tell us whether any person entered your compartment during that time—either in the siding at Waterley or elsewhere during the journey ?

No.

Well, let us go on to the arrival of the 7.29 at Shenstone that evening at 7.32, three minutes late. You were awakened by the porter, Gannett, and you opened your eyes and your hand, and Gannett took the ticket which was in your hand. Had it been in your hand all the way from Westpool ?

Yes. I nearly always keep my ticket in my hand on a short journey. It saves all that confounded digging into pockets you can't get at, and pockets your ticket isn't in.

Did you have anything else in your hand when your train left Westpool ?

My newspaper.

Anything else ?

No.

Not a small brown paper parcel ?

No. I put that on the seat opposite me, where I could see it, so that I shouldn't forget about it, or perhaps stick it into my pocket.

Was it on the seat where you had left it when the porter awoke you at Shenstone ?

No. I couldn't find it. I never found it.

You closed your eyes again. Then someone told you that Sir William had been murdered. Didn't you say : " A good riddance of bad rubbish "—or words to that effect ?

I may have done so. I suppose I was half asleep still and that I thought someone was just talking damn nonsense. I can't conceive that I could have said such a thing if I was fully awake.

You were Sir William's trusted man of business—you had known him for years. Did you go to look at him in his carriage ?

No.

Did you take any steps to have a doctor fetched ?

No. I suppose I felt that, as the man had dismissed me, he had no claim upon my attention, alive or dead.

It was a matter of utter indifference to you whether a man had been murdered in the compartment next to you ?

I have told you what I suppose my frame of mind was at the time. I went home to my house and dined. About 8.30 Sergeant Ryder called. He asked me a lot of questions. I gave him a signed statement. (*Shown Exhibit 13.*) This is the statement I then made. I was perfectly sober at the time. At 11 p.m. Inspector Kaye arrived. He asked me all the questions Sergeant Ryder had already asked me, and a lot more of his own. I gave him another signed statement. (*Witness shown Exhibit 17 (a).*) This is the statement I then gave Inspector Kaye. I may have had a drink or two that

evening. I was probably amusing, but not blotto. It would be absolutely untrue to say that I had been drinking heavily that evening, and that I was so drunk that I could not stand when Inspector Kaye was shown into the room.

I want to turn to another point. You were appointed agent in 1908. Previously to that you had lived on your private means ?

Yes. I inherited £40,000 from my father. In 1905 I passed through the Bankruptcy Court.

By that date—six years after your father's death—you had dissipated a fortune of £40,000 ?

Yes. It's easy to do that if you run a racing stable. For a couple of years I was in low water, until, in 1908, I obtained the post at Shenstone Castle.

By whose recommendation ?

Oh, I had plenty of people to recommend me. I knew the job from A to Z.

Is it the fact that your appointment was chiefly due to the recommendation of Mr. Edward Blundell, the present Lady Ireland's father ?

Mr. Blundell was a very intimate friend of Lord Peter Pakenham's, and his family and mine had been on intimate terms for four or five centuries. No doubt his recommendation carried considerable weight.

I put it to you that your appointment in 1910 by Sir William Ireland was solely due to Mr. Blundell's advocacy—that Sir William only consented to give you the post as a concession to Mr. Blundell's urgent recommendation ?

I will not argue the point.

I must ask you to answer the question ?

I have answered it.

Sir William Ireland's first wife was then still alive ? You had some difficulties with her, had you not ?

She was a very obstinate, autocratic sort of woman,

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without any knowledge whatever of the management of a big estate. Naturally, there were difficulties at times.

In November 1910, Sir William threatened to dismiss you for drunkenness and gross impertinence to his wife ?

He was always threatening to dismiss me about that time, because his wife had a down on me, and he was afraid of his life of her.

You admit, however, that on several occasions, between 1910 and 1915, you were upon the point of dismissal ?

They didn't dismiss me, that's the best answer to that. From 1915 to January 1919 I was serving with the Forces. My post was kept open for me, and my salary paid in full. As I was then forty-three years of age, and as Sir William made, I believe, a couple of millions out of the impulsiveness of ill-advised people like myself, I don't consider that I remain under any obligation to his memory.

Kindly keep to the question asked. Sir William remarried in 1921 ?

Yes. Miss Cicely Blundell, the present Lady Ireland. Yes. I had known her all her life. She is a distant cousin of mine.

Things improved for you greatly then ?

I should not say, exactly, that things "improved" for me, after Sir William's second marriage. I should rather say that they went on quite smoothly, as they had been going since the first Lady Ireland's death, in the year after the Armistice. It would be grossly untrue to say that, but for the present Lady Ireland's protection, I should have been dismissed from my post—

In 1923, a contractor named Woods was sentenced to two years' penal servitude for frauds in connection

with the erection of two rows of labourers' cottages on a road through the estate ?

I admit that I trusted Woods foolishly, and that I didn't look into his accounts as closely as I should have. It was never suggested at the trial that a penny of the money had gone into my pocket.

Again you were on the verge of dismissal ?

The poor old man was always barging at me because I didn't keep spying round the corner of a barn at someone or other.

And again Lady Ireland averted disaster ?

Her husband knew that he had married a sensible wife. I'm quite sure she put in a sensible, kind word for me when it was wanted.

Precisely. You have told us that you are lucky at cards. But not so lucky with horses. Can you tell us anything about two horses called Laughing Lassie and Peppermint ?

I had a half-share in those two horses in 1923 with Major Carter-Duggelay. We paid £350 for Laughing Lassie and £650 for Peppermint. We lost about £1500 apiece on the season. Lady Ireland knew that I had had a lot of bad luck with the horses and advanced me £700 to tide me over.

Advanced ? How much of the £700 have you repaid ?

I have made one payment of £50. Lady Ireland knows that, if I can, I will pay her in the end.

You have had the use of a car exclusively for your own convenience since 1921. Was Lady Ireland responsible for this arrangement ?

Yes. It is a reasonable and, in fact, necessary arrangement, considering the size of the estate.

Your predecessors managed the estate without a car ?

Perhaps. They also managed it without tractors, a scientific rotation of crops, and chemical manures

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But they couldn't manage to pay a living wage to their labourers without bringing the estate into debt. I have known the estate all my life, long before Sir William bought it. Never, in my remembrance, was it properly kept up, until I took it over.

Because the agent hadn't a motor-car ?

Because he hadn't the faintest notion of doing anything but what his great-great-grandfather had done before him. Lady Ireland approved the idea of my having a car for my own use.

Were alterations—extensive alterations—made in your house, at her suggestion ?

Alterations were made. In the year of grace, 1921, a bathroom was put in, and electric light. I had had a good fight for indoor sanitation the year before—1920.

You hunted regularly after 1921 ?

Yes. It had always been the custom for the agent of the estate to hunt regularly. It is, in any sporting country, the usual thing on a large estate.

But until Sir William's second marriage you had not done so ?

No. Sir William was a manufacturer of buckets and bricks. He was no sportsman and did not hunt himself.

It was Lady Ireland who arranged that you should have a couple of horses at your disposal ?

Yes. She hunted regularly and is a very fine horse-woman. I taught her to ride twenty years ago or more.

You became, in fact, a sort of household pet of Lady Ireland's ?

If you like, you can say so. I should be very proud of the compliment.

Especially as it provided you with financial assistance when you wanted it—in addition to such amenities as motor-cars and hunters ?

I don't understand the reason of these questions.

We want to have a clear idea, Mr. Theobald, of your relations with Sir William Ireland and with his wife. You will agree, I think, that but for Lady Ireland's interventions you would have lost your position as agent long before Sir William's death ?

I will not agree to anything of the kind. Sir William knew he could not get as good a man for the job at the wage he paid me.

Let us go back now to your interview with Sir William at the Foundry in Westpool, on the afternoon of October 28th. Did you see Sir William alone ?

No. His secretary was in the room practically all the time, I think. The manager of the Works, Mr. Titheradge, came in with a foreman while I was speaking to Sir William. They overheard part of our conversation. Other people came in and went out.

You were never actually alone with Sir William at any time ?

No, as far as I can recall.

Would you be surprised to hear that not only were you alone with him for ten minutes, but that you locked all the three doors which opened into his office, so as to prevent anyone else coming in ?

I should be very much surprised. If that is so, the secretary must have left the room without my noticing him.

You do not recall having locked any doors ?

No. I did not see Sir William lock any doors, that I can remember. Certainly our conversation was private, or ought to have been.

Was there any greater reason why, at any particular point in your conversation, he should have locked these doors ?

None, more than at any other time—except to prevent our being interrupted again.

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No particular topic was discussed between you ?

No. No more particular than my dismissal.

Will you look at this document. (*Shown Exhibit 23.*)
Is it in your handwriting ?

Yes.

I will read it to you. "In consideration of services rendered and to be rendered, I hereby appoint Claude Robert Theobald permanent agent of my estate at Shenstone Castle, at a salary of £600 a year, with house, fuel and light, sole use of car for estate purposes, one indoor and one outdoor servant, from October 28th, 1925, until the date of my death or the sale of the estate by me, or until this agreement shall be cancelled by the written request of the aforesaid Claude Robert Theobald." You wrote that out on a piece of the office notepaper in Sir William's office ?

Yes.

It is clearly a document which it was your desire Sir William should sign ?

Yes. I wanted to have things on paper.

You wrote this out at your own initiative ?

Yes.

Will you tell us more precisely for what consideration Sir William was to sign this undertaking ?

For the benefit of my services.

That is to say you said to him : "Look here. I want this nice job at £600 a year made a permanency, at all events during your lifetime. So just sign this, saying it is so." You suggested no reason why he should agree to sign it ?

Every reason that was to his advantage.

Your own merits ?

Yes.

No other reason ?

No.

You are sure ?

Quite sure.

Sir William did not sign the document ?

Obviously.

You went away after that ?

Yes.

You did not succeed in eliciting from Sir William the name of your proposed successor ?

No.

As you left the Works did you meet Lady Ireland crossing the yard to her husband's office ?

I believe so, yes.

Did you have any conversation with her ?

I told her that her husband had dismissed me. She said that was nonsense ; and that she would speak to Sir William about it. She said she did not know the name of anyone likely to get the post. I thanked her and went away.

Did you make any arrangement to meet her again that afternoon ?

Arrangement ? No. I may have mentioned that I intended to return to Shenstone by the train leaving Westpool at 6.22.

Did you, in fact, have any conversation with Lady Ireland at any time later that afternoon ?

I spoke to her for a few minutes at Cross Street Terminus. She told me that she had had a talk with Sir William about my dismissal, that he had been very ill-tempered and had refused to reconsider his decision. Sir William was at the book-stall while I was speaking to Lady Ireland. I spoke to her only for a few moments.

Did she give you anything while you were speaking to her ?

Witness (after some hesitation).—Yes. She gave me a small brown paper packet, and asked me to give it to Hopgood, the chauffeur.

Did she tell you what it contained ?

No. She did not say what was in it. She gave it to me hurriedly as she was turning away from me. Sir William was leaving the bookstall.

What size was the packet ?

About six or seven inches long and an inch or so wide, and roughly made up in brown paper.

Were the ends closed ?

I think so. At any rate, they were folded in.

Was it tied about with string ?

I believe so.

Is this the string ? (*Witness shown Exhibit 15.*)

I could not say.

Was the string tied across both ends, or how ?

I think just wrapped round the middle, loosely. I formed no conclusion as to what it contained. It was fairly heavy, I think, for its size, but I paid no particular attention to it.

What did you do with it after Lady Ireland had given it to you ?

I kept it in my hand so that I should not forget to give it to Hopgood. My memory is bad for small things of that sort.

You are accustomed to attending to a number of details in your day's work ?

Yes. My work is different. A man may be accustomed to painting or drawing with minute accuracy, and may be incapable of remembering whether he has shaved himself or not. I am very forgetful about posting letters and little things of that sort.

At any rate, you say you kept the packet in your hand after Lady Ireland had given it to you. You walked away along the platform, and when you came back to the slip-carriage, you saw that Sir William and Lady Ireland had got into the first-class compartment. You then got into the third-class compartment, behind them ?

Yes.

Was the brown paper packet still in your hand then ?

Yes.

What did you do with it when you got into your carriage ?

I put it on the cushion of the seat opposite me, where I should see it. I read my paper for a little while and then I fell asleep. I was awakened at Shenstone Station by the porter Gannett pulling my arm and saying : " Shenstone, sir."

You slept all the way from Westpool to Shenstone ? You did not awake when the slip-coach was slipped at Waterley, and run into the siding to wait until it was joined on to the train that was to leave Waterley at 7.15. The noise of the shunting did not disturb you. The whistling of the engine did not awaken you. You do not know whether anyone got into or left the carriage between Westpool and Shenstone ?

No.

When the porter awakened you at Shenstone, you did not leave the carriage for some little time ?

No. I could not find the brown paper packet. I searched everywhere, but could not find it. My newspaper was on the floor of the carriage. It had slipped off the seat while I was asleep.

Had you opened the brown paper packet ?

No.

Nor examined it at all ?

No. At that time I had still no idea what it contained.

When did you first learn what it had contained ?

When Inspector Kaye called at my house that night.

He told you that it had contained a pocket-knife belonging to Hopgood ?

Yes. Hopgood's name and address were written on a small label attached to the parcel. The piece of

string had been very loosely wrapped round the parcel, I believe. It was a very hurriedly made little packet.

It did not occur to you to look anywhere else in the carriage—in the corridor, for instance—before you went away?

No. I knew where I had left it. I was surprised that it had disappeared.

You are habitually a very sound sleeper?

Yes. It is a regular thing for me to sleep the entire journey from Westpool to Paddington or Paddington to Westpool without opening my eyes. On that afternoon I was very tired, mentally and physically.

David Beechinor, 39.—I am employed as odd-job man by Mr. Theobald. When his housekeeper, Mrs. Gobb, was ill last year, I was employed in his house as indoor servant for over three months. I have known it happen that I might call him five or six times of a morning and not get him out of his bed in time for his breakfast.

Cross-examined.—You have been summonsed several times for drunkenness and violence?

The police have laid themselves out always to put it across me.

You have been summonsed some seventeen times altogether, for various offences?

Not as often as that.

You are not married to the woman you are living with, are you?

No. I couldn't afford to marry her.

You have had six children by her?

Yes.

And you haven't been able to earn enough money to pay your clergyman to marry you? On the 14th of May last you assaulted Sir William Ireland in the village Institute at Shenstone, and broke his umbrella, because he asked you not to make so much noise while

Professor Wright was speaking. You were summonsed, and sentenced to fourteen days or £5 ?

A poor man has no chance against a rich man. Sir William was a magistrate himself.

Who paid your fine ?

Mr. Theobald.

Henry Hopgood, 33, chauffeur.—I was employed as chauffeur at Shenstone Castle from May 1921 to November 1925. (*Shown Exhibit 3.*) I identify this as my pocket-knife. It was given to me by Sir William Ireland at the beginning of October last.

Tell us under what circumstances it was given to you ?

I lent Sir William my penknife on October 22nd. I took him and Lady Ireland up to a shooting-party near Norton St. Philip's. He wanted to make a memorandum of something, and he borrowed my pencil and my knife to sharpen the pencil, as he was getting out of the car. I never saw either of them again. He remembered next day about them—he never forgot anything—and he told me to go and buy the best knife I could find in place of my own, in Westpool.

This is an unusually large, strong penknife, is it not ?

Yes. I always carry a good, strong knife. It always comes in handy in my job. On October 27th, Lady Ireland told me that Sir William had said my name had better be engraved on the plate of the knife, in case he ever borrowed it. She told me that I was to give it to her, and that she was to bring it up to Westpool with her next day, October 28th, when she was going. The car was not going up that day. There were two name-plates on the knife, one on each side. I had already scratched my name on one plate, and bitten it in with a drop of acid. But I thought it might as well be properly done, on the other plate, as it

wouldn't cost me anything. I gave the knife to Lady Ireland just before she left the car at Shenstone Station on the afternoon of October 28th, to catch the 1.30 for Westpool.

I observe that the second plate bears no mark or name ?

Lady Ireland did not have time to leave the knife to be done. You can easily read my name and address on the other plate—the one I engraved on. It is an amateur job, but anyone could read it glancing at it.

The blades had been sharpened, apparently ?

Yes. I sharpened all the blades when I got it first.

About the end of September, you were intimate, were you not, with a young woman named Phœbe Carr ?

I went out with her two or three evenings or so, just for a walk. There was nothing serious in it. She is a young lady I have every respect for, but I was not paying her any serious attentions.

Pilker thought otherwise, did he not ?

If Pilker thought otherwise, he was wrong. I do not remember that I made any point of not speaking to him, after we had a few words at the station. I should have thought it silly to bear a grudge over a thing like that.

Where were you on the evening of October 28th last from 6.30 until 7.30 ?

I was in the Premier Picture House in Magnus Street, in Waterley.

At what time did you go there ?

I went into the second house at 6.30.

At what time did you leave the Picture House ?

I came out at twenty minutes to nine, in time to catch the nine o'clock train home to Shenstone.

At what time had you left Shenstone to go up to Waterley that afternoon ?

After I had taken Lady Ireland to the station for

the 1.30, and brought the car back. I went up by the 2.45.

What did you do in Waterley from 3 to 6.30 ?

I can't say I did anything particular until I went into the Picture House at 6.30. I just walked about, and had a couple of drinks, and a cup of tea about five o'clock.

Where ?

At the Corona Restaurant. I met a young lady that I knew there, and went and sat at her table and talked to her for a bit.

What is the young lady's name ?

I do not know her surname. Her Christian name is Milly.

Had you met her before ?

I had only met her a couple of times before.

You know nothing about her—where she lived ?

No.

Could you identify the waitress who gave you tea ?

No. I don't expect I could. I didn't pay any attention to her.

From three o'clock, when you arrived at Waterley, did you meet anyone else you knew besides this young lady at the restaurant ?

No. I don't know many people in Waterley.

Can you produce any person to speak to your whereabouts on that afternoon and evening from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. ?

No. Not that I can think of.

Were you in the neighbourhood of Waterley Station at any time that afternoon or evening or night ?

No.

Do you know Welder Road.

I have heard of it. I have a rough idea of where it is.

Look at this map. You see that Welder Road runs

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out from the town in a south-westerly direction, passing under the railway embankment through a tunnel. Just where it emerges from the tunnel, there is a house. Facing it, on the other side, is the wall enclosing Messrs. Ireland & Bunton's brickyards. The road joins the main Waterley-Baynham road about half a mile farther on. Do you know that road ?

Yes. I have a general idea where it is.

Have you been along it ?

I believe so. I have walked all about Waterley, killing time. I have no friends there.

Did you go along that road on the evening of October 28th last ?

No.

Do you know this house, near the entrance to the tunnel, facing the brickyard ?

I can't say I do.

Do you ?

I may have seen it. I have a sort of idea that I have seen a house somewhere along there.

Were you anywhere near that house on the night of October 28th ?

No.

You are sure ?

Quite sure.

Were you on the railway embankment at any time that night ?

No.

What were the pictures shown at the Picture House ?

"God's Way"; "Felix"; "Love, Lucre and Buck"; and the Topical News.

Charles White, 43, motor driver.—On the afternoon of October 28th last, I was returning with my lorry, empty, to Messrs. Ireland & Bunton's Brick and Tile yard at Waterley, where I am employed. I went by

Welder Road from the town. Welder Road passes beneath the railway embankment by a tunnel. The tunnel is about a hundred and fifty yards long. It was a very dark, foggy sort of afternoon. There was no lamp in the tunnel, but you could see a person who was against the light of the tunnel's opening. As I came up to the end of the tunnel nearest to the brick and tile yard, which is on the south-west side of the railway, between it and the river, I saw a man standing in under the tunnel and leaning against the wall. He seemed to be waiting for something. It struck me at the time that it was a funny place for a chap to wait.

Why ?

Because the road is a lonely one, in very bad order, with no houses and very little used, except by our lorries. There is one house near the railway-arch, but I did not think that anyone lived in it, except a caretaker. Except for it there are no houses from the brickyard until you get nearly into the town at the north side of the railway.

Could you make out how the man was dressed ?

As I passed him I saw that he was dressed in a shover's livery, with cap and leggings and a short overcoat. I went on to the brickyard and picked up a load. I went back with the load the way I had come—that is to say, along Welder Road. That was about five o'clock or a little after. It got dusk early that afternoon, but I could see the same man in the same place. There is a lamp above the tunnel-arch—a gas-lamp. It was lighted then, and he seemed to be looking up at it. At a quarter to six I came back with my lorry by the same way. I saw the same man in the recess where the steps are leading up from the road to the top of the embankment. He was striking a match when I saw him first. Then he went into the recess, so that I couldn't see him. I formed the impression that he was

trying to conceal himself. I think at first he did not hear my lorry coming on account of the noise of the shunting up in the goods yard. When he saw my lights he went inside the recess. He did not go up the steps that I saw. I thought it very queer that he should be hanging about in the same place for so long, and the way he went on, dodging into the recess, made me notice him. My engine was missing, and when I reached the yard I had to take out my plugs and clean them. This took me a bit, and then I had to fill up with a load of bricks to go out first thing next morning. It was just seven when I left the yard to go home walking. I went by Welder Road towards the town. As I came near the tunnel, I heard voices talking angrily somewhere, and then a cry in a woman's voice. I thought it was up on the embankment, above my lorry. The scream sounded as if it was a woman being hurt. The voices stopped, and then the same man I'd seen before came, half running, out of the recess by the steps and went away very quickly under the tunnel, still half running. I never overtook him. Next day, when I read about the murder, I saw that the knife it had been done with had belonged to a chauffeur. It came into my head then that it was queer that I should have seen this chauffeur hanging about so long in that place. He could easily have got to where the murder was committed from where I saw him—up by the steps. The siding where they said the murder had been committed was almost right over the tunnel, about half-way along it. An active chap could have reached it from where I saw this man in two minutes or less.

I thought over it for a week or so. On November 9th I went to the police and told them what I had seen. On November 10th, at Saltash Street Police Station in Waterley, I picked out three men from amongst twelve dressed in chauffeur's livery, as being like in figure to

the man I had seen near the railway embankment. I could not swear that anyone of the three was the man I had seen : Henry Hopgood was one of the three men I picked out.

Look attentively at this man (Henry Hopgood). Is this the man you saw near the embankment that evening ?

I could not say. It is like him in the figure, that is all I can say.

Cross-examined.—There is no lamp at that part of Welder Road except the lamp over the tunnel-arch ?

There is a gas-lamp just as you come to Ireland & Bunton's gates. But that's a good bit away. It would not throw any light much near the tunnel or the recess where the steps are. My lamps showed up the man quite clearly. I'm quite sure he got into the recess to hide. I am sure that he was the man whom I had seen before that evening waiting there.

Look at this man (David Beechinor). Is this the man you saw that evening ?

I don't know. It might be him. It's a bit like him in the figure, too.

Célestine Marie Brochard, 66.—I am a British subject. I have resided in England for over forty years. Until the war I supported myself by giving French and German lessons in Westpool and afterwards in Waterley as well. In the first year of the war I lost both my sons. They died for France. I do not regret it ; the world is a bad place to live in now. They had been in the habit of helping me. They were both the most dutiful of sons. It was necessary to do something, even at a sacrifice of social prestige. I decided to let lodgings if I could find a cheap house. In 1915 I rented the house in Welder Road near the railway-arch.

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I got it at a cheap rent, as it had been vacant for a long time and was in bad repair. Since then I have tried to exist by letting rooms there. One must say that it is an existence. My lodgers never stay. The noise of the trains prevents them from sleeping. You can gain the station easily from the road by the steps at the side of my house ascending the embankment. In October last I had no tenant in the house. I do not remember the 28th of October. When one is poor and old, all the days are the same. I remember that there was a murder in the station some time in that month. But as I can't afford to buy newspapers, I did not probably hear of this tragedy until several days after it had been perpetrated.

But you can recall something of the evening of October 28th. Can you say on what date you actually did hear that a murder had been committed on the railway embankment?

I cannot say. My memory is not what it was. On reflecting, I think that perhaps I may have heard on the 30th or 31st. I may have heard on the 29th. I cannot say.

Can you remember no event that occurred on the afternoon or evening of October 28th?

Alas, no. I can remember that the 21st was my beloved eldest son's birthday. That is all. Had he lived, he would that day have been——

Can you recall noticing on any day about that date, October 28th of last year, any person loitering in the vicinity of the railway tunnel or the steps leading up, near it, to the embankment?

Yes. I remember sometimes an individual. I cannot say, however, on what day precisely I had seen him. Perhaps October 28th. I cannot be sure. Oh yes, I have seen him several times—provided that this was always the same individual. I think it may have

been the same, but I cannot be sure of that. He was doing nothing. He was standing—standing for a long time, then walking a little, then standing again. Sometimes for an hour, perhaps longer. I used to look through a window and see him, and forget him, and when I looked again, there he was. I used to ask myself what is it that this individual waits for? I had no fear. His air was of the most respectable.

Can you describe his appearance?

Very strong, with leggings on his legs. I think sometimes a peaked cap. Sometimes I believed that his automobile waited for someone belonging to the Works. Their gate is not distant from where I saw him, though out of sight, because the road curves. Usually in the evening I have seen him, after my five o'clock or just before. I have never seen his face to distinguish how he looked. I do not think I have seen him a dozen times.

Half a dozen times?

Perhaps more often than that. I have lived in the country in my beloved France when I was a little one. I have never had fear of being alone. Once I have driven away a great savage with a blow of this small hand, such as you see me——

Never mind that. You say that it would have been perfectly easy for this man, or anyone else in Welder Road, to have gained access by the steps to the embankment top?

Oh yes. I, myself, when I had my legs, have done that to reach the station more quickly when I went to buy the newspapers for my tenants. It is illegal, but one avoids a long walk.

You cannot, however, remember that you saw this man loitering about on that particular evening?

No. I am desolated since I know it is important, but I cannot remember.

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Look attentively, please, at this man (Henry Hopgood). Have you seen him before ?

Witness (after some hesitation).—Yes. I believe I have seen him before.

Where ?

I believe I have seen this young man in Welder Road sometimes.

When ?

I think it may have been about this time of which you speak—last October. I cannot be sure, but it was about that period. I have seen him walk by the house, I believe. But most often he used to stand near the arch, facing the house, as if he were waiting for someone. I could not swear that it was this young man. But certainly he whom I saw wore the uniform of a chauffeur sometimes. But sometimes the attire of a civilian. It is not to say that I noticed this individual with a great attention. I may have seen him six or eight times altogether. It is a very lonely road. Not many people find the view of the railway embankment and the wall of the brickyard very interesting to look at. I have at no time found traces in my house of anyone intruding during my absence.

Horace Summerton, 52, manager, Messrs. Ireland & Bunton's Brick and Tile Manufactory, Waterley.—On the morning of October 28th last, Mr. Theobald came into my office at the Works. I have known him since my appointment to the managership of the Factory. He invited me to lunch with him at the Conservative Club. In the course of lunch I asked him what the trouble was between him and Sir William. He appeared surprised, and asked what trouble. I told him that I had heard from a reliable source that Sir William intended to dismiss him from his post and appoint someone else in his stead. I refused to tell him from

whom I had heard this. I had heard it from Sir William himself, and from his secretary at the Foundry in Westpool, Mr. Carmichael. I had not heard the name of his successor, but I had an idea that it was a nephew of Sir William's—a Mr. Swann. I cannot say why I had formed this idea, which was, I now know, erroneous. Mr. Theobald was very much agitated. I told him that Sir William had several times during the past few years complained to me and to other people of the way in which he had performed his duties—that he was slack and getting too old for his work; also that he drank more than was good for him. Sir William had made this complaint to me, personally, three or four times within the past few years. Mr. Theobald spoke of suing Sir William for wrongful dismissal and libel. He was greatly excited and very angry. He drank three large whiskies and sodas, before and during lunch. He rang up the Foundry at Westpool from my office and arranged to see Sir William that afternoon at the Foundry.

Did he use any threats in regard to Sir William?

He spoke with great heat. He used some violent expressions, but I did not take them at all seriously. He is an impulsive man and prone to say the first thing that comes into his head. I cannot remember exactly any of the phrases which he used. He said something about it's being time that the old rascal was blotted out. I remember the phrase, "blotted out," being used. I did not attach any importance to it.

Cross-examined.—You have known Theobald intimately for many years?

Since my appointment as manager to the Factory in 1908. He is a man of rather hasty temper, and prone to saying much more than he means, just for the satisfaction of relieving his feelings a little. But, from my knowledge of him, he is the kindest-hearted man in

the world, and, I believe, incapable of entertaining serious anger against anyone for longer than half an hour.

Re-examined.—Do you remember an incident which occurred at the Theatre Royal in Westpool in the winter of 1924—an incident in which Theobald was concerned? He injured a man called Walshe in the bar of the theatre?

Walshe insulted him grossly without any provocation, and he and his friends hustled Mr. Theobald. Walshe was a professional pugilist, the leader of a racing gang and a notorious bully. When I and Mr. Theobald remonstrated, Walshe struck me in the face, and knocked me down. Mr. Theobald gave him a severe thrashing.

Walshe's eye was permanently damaged?

I am personally aware that Mr. Theobald gave him a tenner for medical expenses.

In anger he is a violent man?

Yes, to a certain degree.

A dangerous man?

I should not use the word "dangerous." He is a powerful man, yes.

Douglas Carmichael, 43, secretary.—I have been employed as secretary to Sir William at the Foundry for the past seven years. I remember Mr. Theobald coming to the Foundry about 3 o'clock on the afternoon of October 28th last. He had a conversation with Sir William Ireland, in Sir William's office. I was present at the greater part of the conversation. My desk is in a corner of the room, at some distance from Sir William's table. I had a great deal of work to attend to that afternoon, and did not pay any particular attention to what Mr. Theobald said to Sir William.

Tell us what you heard said?

I gathered that they were discussing the question of Mr. Theobald's dismissal from the estate agency.

What condition was Mr. Theobald in ?

In an excited condition.

Was he sober ?

I judged him not quite sober.

Have you known him to enter Sir William's office at the Foundry before when not quite sober ?

It was nothing uncommon for him to come into Sir William's office not quite sober, and talk excitedly. I heard Sir William say several times : " That's all I've got to say," or " I've got nothing more to say." The discussion lasted about twenty minutes. Several people were in and out of the office during it, and Sir William interrupted his conversation with Mr. Theobald several times. Sir William then conveyed to me that he wished me to leave the office—I went out.

How many doors lead into the office ?

Three doors. The keys of all three doors were kept on the inside—that is—in Sir William's office.

Were these doors all unlocked when you left the office ?

All three were unlocked, to my knowledge, when I left the office. About ten or fifteen minutes later—or perhaps a little longer—Sir William's telephone summoned me back to his office. I found the door by which I had gone out locked. Mr. Theobald unlocked it and admitted me. He went away shortly afterwards. Sir William told me to unlock the other two doors. He said that " that drunken old fool " (meaning Mr. Theobald, I assumed) had locked them. I formed the opinion that Mr. Theobald's conversation with Sir William was a very heated one.

Did Sir William convey to you what matters he had discussed with Mr. Theobald during your absence ?

In a general way he conveyed that it was about Mr. Theobald's being dismissed.

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Did you hear Theobald say anything after you returned to the room?

No. He spoke in a lowered voice. I did not hear anything he said. The telephone on my desk rang, and I had to speak to Swansea for some time.

Charles Titheradge, 46, manager.—On the afternoon of October 28th last, between 3 and 4 p.m., I had occasion to go into Sir William Ireland's office at the Foundry. I saw Mr. Theobald there. He was talking to Sir William. I waited for a minute or two before Sir William turned to me. I heard Mr. Theobald say: "I'm not threatening you. I'm merely telling you that, if you turn me out of my post, I'll get my own back, some way or somehow. I know one way—and your wife knows it too——" He stopped then, perceiving that I and the foreman, Judd, who had come in with me, were within hearing. I performed my business with Sir William and left the office with the foreman.

Gregory Judd, 42.—I am employed as works foreman at Messrs. Ireland's Foundry in Westpool. I remember going into Sir William's office with Mr. Titheradge, the manager, in the course of the afternoon of October 28th last. I corroborate what he has stated. Mr. Theobald was very excited and red in the face. I thought he was screwed.

Screwed?

Well, not quite sober, if you know what I mean.

Charles Peddy, M.R.C.V.S., 52, Westpool.—I am a veterinary surgeon in practice in Westpool. On the afternoon of October 28th last I met Theobald in the bar of the Rose and Thorn Hotel. I asked him to come up to the Grenville Club with me. He had a few drinks

there with some friends of mine—not more than a couple of whiskies apiece—— We played poker for a while. It was a pretty hot game. Theobald won thirty pounds or thereabouts. He was excited that afternoon: he always is. He was born sweating and using bad language about the monthly nurse, I believe. He means nothing by it. He is the kindest-hearted chap in the world. I have known him for a great many years.

Did he say to you, and to one of your friends, “For two pins I’d slit the old hog’s gullet for him?”

No. He said: “For two bloody pins I’d slit the bloody old hog’s bloody gullet for him.”

I must ask you to be serious?

You asked me what he said. I’ve told you.

At what time did he leave you and your friends?

About six, I believe.

Before he went away did he use the telephone?

Yes.

At what time?

About five or some time after, I think.

Did you overhear any of his conversation at the telephone?

Yes. I didn’t listen, but I heard a word or two here and there. He was speaking to someone—a garage in Waterley—about his car. He had left it there to be repaired that afternoon.

Did you hear the name Beechinor mentioned?

Yes. He spoke to someone called Beechinor about leaving the car there at the garage that night.

Did you hear him say that he would meet Beechinor at Cross Street Terminus that evening—or words to that effect?

No. All I heard was about leaving the car at the garage. It was a rotten night. He didn’t want to drive back to Shenstone, I gathered.

Herbert Withers, 49, ticket inspector, Cross Street Terminus.—I remember the evening of October 28th last. I inspected the tickets of the passengers by the 6.22 for Waterley and beyond on that evening, immediately before the train went out. The slip-coach for North Pier was at the end of that train, as usual. It consisted of four compartments, in order from the front—a third-class smoker, a third class, a first-class smoker, and a third class. It was a corridor carriage. Speaking from a memorandum made by me that night, there were three passengers in the carriage at the time when I checked the tickets. In the first-class compartment were a lady and a gentleman.

Is this (Lady Ireland) the lady?

Yes.

Did you at the time know who the gentleman and lady were?

No.

There was no one in either of the two front compartments. There was a gentleman in the last compartment, the end third-class one. I identify this gentleman (Mr. Theobald) as the gentleman. I had no conversation with him. The train was late. I merely looked at his ticket and left the carriage. The train went out immediately after that.

Can you tell us how the lady and gentleman in the first-class compartment were sitting when you checked their tickets?

The gentleman faced the engine in the corner next the platform, *i.e.* the left-hand corner facing the engine. The lady sat on the same side in the other corner. They were both reading newspapers. The gentleman in the third-class compartment was on the platform side, in the corner seat facing the engine. He was reading a newspaper also when I went in, I think. I do not recall seeing a small brown paper parcel in his

hand or on the seat, or anywhere in the carriage. His feet were on the seat. It was a foggyish night, frosty. In consequence of what I heard later that evening I made a memorandum of what I knew of the passengers in the slip-carriage.

Were the blinds of the first-class compartment drawn down ?

No. To the best of my recollection, none of them was drawn down.

Herbert Goodney, stationmaster, Waterley.—The 6.22 from Westpool was two minutes behind time on the evening of October 28th, on account of the fog. That train is an express from Westpool to Waterley. It slips a coach for North Pier at Waterley, and goes on by Baynham to Plymouth. The slip-carriage runs into a siding. (*Shown plan of Waterley Station. Exhibit 12.*) This plan is correct. The siding into which the slip-carriage runs is marked S. The slip-carriage waits in the siding until the train which comes up from Plymouth by Baynham arrives at Waterley. That train is afterwards shunted into siding S, where the slip-carriage is attached to it. I beg your pardon. I should have said that that train stops first at No. 3 platform to take up and put down passengers. It is then shunted into siding S and picks up the slip-coach. From the siding it goes out of the station by the track marked T on the plan. It does not stop then in the station, but goes out directly from the siding. The first stop between Waterley and North Pier is Shenstone.

Let us get this quite clearly. There are two trains concerned. The schedule times for one of them are as follows :

London	d. 3.45
Westpool	.	.	a. 6.12	.	d. 6.22
Waterley	.	.	a. 6.57	.	d. 7.7 (for Plymouth)

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This is the train that slips a carriage outside Waterley at 6.57.

The schedule times for the other train, the train coming up from Plymouth by Baynham, are :

Plymouth	d. 4.15
Waterley	a. 7.12 d. 7.15
Shenstone (first stop)	a. 7.29
North Pier	a. 8.10

On October 28th this train left Waterley two minutes late—*i.e.* at 7.17, and arrived at Shenstone three minutes late, *i.e.* at 7.32. Is that correct ?

Yes. That is correct. The run from Waterley to Shenstone is about seven miles. It takes fourteen minutes by schedule time. On that evening there were a good many passengers in the portion of the train which had come up from Baynham, but there was plenty of room in the train. Three coaches came up from Baynham. The slip-carriage was attached behind these.

Look at this plan of Waterley Station. Is it correct ?

Witness.—Yes. I have examined it carefully and initialed it.

The station stands on an embankment, above the level of the surrounding ground ? ¹

Yes. The station and the lines running into it stand on an embankment, about thirty feet above the level of the surrounding streets. Roughly, the embankment forms a cross. The line for Westpool curves northwards somewhat as it enters the station, but may be taken as the long arm of the cross. The Baynham line, running south-west, and the line to Hanley-on-Sea, running north-east, form the two short arms. The ground here, along the river Sallow, is low lying and mostly marshy. The town lies to the north of the

¹ See sketch plan of station, p. 8.

station. There are three platforms, Nos. 1, 2 and 3. No. 1 being the north platform, No. 3 the south, with No. 2 between. The goods yard is about a hundred yards from the platforms, east of them, and on the south side of the embankment.

The siding S, in which the slip-carriage from the Westpool train waits to be attached to the North Pier train, is about 120 yards distant from the eastern end of platform No. 3, and about 150 yards distant from the eastern end of platform No. 1. It is situated on a triangular space surrounded by the Westpool line, the Baynham line, and a set of lines linking these, and used for shunting purposes and as a goods yard. The space separating the track leading into the siding, the track by which the slip-carriage enters it, would be in area, in the shortest direction about thirty-five yards—and in its longest about fifty-five to sixty yards. The siding is lighted now by electric light—two large arc-lamps. In October last it was lighted by a single gas-lamp.

The evening of October 28th last was a foggy one ?

Yes. A very sharp frost set in early that evening and that made it foggy. It was thick enough about 6.30 to lay fog-signals, but not until then.

Would any person moving about that evening in the siding where the slip-coach stood have been visible from any of the platforms of the station ?

No. I do not think so.

Would the lights of the windows of the slip-coach have been visible to a person on any of the platforms ?

I should say they would have been visible to a person at the east end of any of the platforms, if he had known where to look for them.

Would they have been visible to the signalman in the East Signal Cabin ?

I should say so.

Where does the East Signal Cabin stand ?

To the south of the Westpool line, between it and the goods yard, about 120 yards from the buffers of the siding where the slip-carriage stood, and about 250 yards from the east end of the station platforms.

The slip-carriage was slipped that evening from the Westpool train, at the usual place outside the station at or about 6.57. It ran into the siding and came to a stop against the buffers there ?

Yes.

How long did it remain there ?

Well, the London train was two minutes late. Say it reached the siding at 6.57 or 9. The train to which it was attached then got into Waterley at 7.12, also a couple of minutes behind time. It stopped at platform 3, to put off and take up passengers, and then shunted out to the siding. Say it got there at 7.14 or 15. It left for North Pier, with the slip-coach attached at 7.17. That makes it that the slip-coach stood in or near the siding about eighteen minutes altogether—fourteen or fifteen minutes by itself, and two or three minutes while it was being shunted on to the North Pier train.

There was no brakesman on the slip-carriage ? It simply came to a stop against the buffers ?

Yes. Since October last a coach with a brake-van-compartment and a brakesman has been used.

Did you personally superintend the attachment of the slip-carriage to the other three carriages of the North Pier train ?

No. Not personally. When the Plymouth down train had gone out at 7.9, I left platform 1 and crossed the lines at the east end to platform 3. I stood there for a moment or so—say three minutes—until I had seen the North Pier train move away from that platform out towards the siding to pick up the slip-carriage. I then went up along No. 3 platform towards the other

end, and stood there until the train passed me, going out of the station, with the slip-coach attached.

As it passed, did you observe the passengers in the slip-carriage ?

No. There was no reason why I should.

Did you notice whether the blinds of the first-class compartment were drawn down ?

I can't say that I did. It is a common thing, especially in first-class carriages, for the blinds to be drawn down on winter nights. If I noticed it, I did not notice it at all particularly.

Were there any passengers in any of the other compartments ?

I cannot say, of my own knowledge and from my own observation at the time, whether there was any passenger in any of the other three compartments.

Is it the fact that, at this time, October of last year, and for some considerable time previously, passengers for North Pier and the intervening stations, who were waiting on platform 3 for the up-train from Baynham to come in, sometimes walked across the tracks to the siding where the slip-carriage was waiting and got into it ?

If any passengers did so, they did it in violation of the Company's Rules and Regulations.

Have you ever known or seen personally any passengers do this ?

Never. I have heard since that some particular passengers made a regular practice of it in winter time, to save waiting in the cold on the platform. But I cannot say, from my own knowledge, whether this is correct.

All tickets collected at any station are returned next day to the issuing station, where they are checked by the booking-clerk. (*Shown Exhibit 14.*) This is the To-half of a first-class return ticket issued at Waterley on the 28th of October last, to Shenstone and back.

It was given up at Shenstone on October 28th. It was not checked or punched by any ticket-inspector at Waterley. If it had been, there would be a star-shaped punch-mark and the letter A cut out of the ticket. That means that the passenger who gave up this return half at Shenstone had not passed the ticket inspectors at either of the entrances to Waterley Station.

Can you explain how any passenger could have travelled from Waterley to Shenstone by that train and given up a ticket from Waterley to Shenstone which had not been punched at Waterley?

He might have extended his up-journey. Coming back he would travel to Waterley on a "beyond" ticket to there. For the rest of the journey he would use the return half of the Shenstone-Waterley ticket.

But in that case, that traveller, if he arrived at Shenstone in the slip-carriage, must either have travelled from "beyond" to Waterley in the slip-carriage, or have got into the slip-carriage at some point, without passing a ticket-collector at Waterley?

That is so.

We know that Captain Ingoldsby did not do that. He purchased a return ticket to Shenstone and back at Waterley, at the booking-office. To get on to the platform he must have passed the ticket-collector. Can you explain why his ticket was not punched then?

No. I cannot explain that.

Is there any way by which one could reach the siding S without entering the station by either of the two doors at which ticket-inspectors were stationed?

No. Except by the goods yard. That is right across at the other side. I cannot explain why this ticket was not punched.

Albert Routley, 36, engine-driver.—On the 28th of October last I brought up the 4.15 train from Plymouth

to Waterley, *via* Baynham, arriving at Waterley at 7.14 at No. 3 platform. I was two minutes late that evening. From the platform I took the three coaches of the train out to the siding near the East Cabin, and picked up the slip-carriage waiting there. I then went on with the train to North Pier. I left Waterley at 7.17, two minutes behind time. I was three minutes behind time at Shenstone, when I arrived at 7.32. This was owing to the fog which got very thick in places after six o'clock. I did not pay any attention to the passengers in the slip-coach, while shunting it at Waterley. But I remember noticing that the blinds were down in one compartment. I had my engine to attend to, and I was late. I saw no one near the slip-coach except Johnson, the porter, who walked along the track with a lantern to the siding to couple the slip-carriage on. The fog was thickish then. I could see my signals, but not too well. There might have been a dozen people about without my seeing them. There were plenty of people working over in the goods yard.

William Johnson, 24, porter, Waterley Station.—On the evening of October 28th, I went along the track to the siding, to couple the slip-coach to the 7.15 for North Pier. It was late that evening. I observed that the blinds of the first-class compartment of the slip-coach were down. There was a gentleman and a lady in the end compartment. They were standing up when I saw them. I did not see anyone in either of the other two compartments. I was on the ground. I saw only the heads of the lady and gentleman. They appeared to be talking. I cannot identify the lady. Her back was towards me.

They were standing, facing one another ?

Yes. I believe so.

Talking to one another ?

S.-C.M.

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It seemed so to me. I noticed nothing unusual about them. They were just standing there ordinary.

Look at this lady (Lady Ireland). Do you recognise her as the lady you saw ?

No. I didn't see her face.

Looking at her back, can you form any opinion as to whether there is any resemblance to the lady you saw ?

No. I cannot say.

Is this (Captain Ingoldsby) the gentleman whose head you saw ?

I could not say. He was standing under the light, and the brim of his hat put his face in shadow. The gentleman I saw was wearing clothes similar to those this gentleman is wearing now—a grey felt hat, and a Burberry coat.

Did you see any other person near the slip-coach ?

No.

Had there been anyone near it, would you—or could you, have seen him ?

I might have. But there was a great deal of fog. And if they had been behind the other carriages resting in the siding, or over in the goods siding among the wagons, I shouldn't have seen them. I didn't look to see. The train was late. I just coupled on the coach, and signalled with my lantern to the cabin and the driver. Then I went back along the track to No. 3 platform. By the end compartment, I mean the compartment which was nearest to the engine when the shunting was completed.

I have been employed as porter at Waterley Station for four years. It is against the Company's regulations for passengers to walk along the tracks.

Have you known this done ?

I have known, as long as I have been at Waterley that passengers sometimes walked across from No. 3 platform to the slip-carriage in the siding, particularly

in winter, when it was cold waiting on the platform. This was not a regular practice. I never heard of anyone interfering with its being done. I should not say that more than one or maybe two passengers would do it on any one evening, except on market-day, Wednesday, at Waterley. The 28th of October was a Wednesday, market-day.

Did you personally see any passengers go to the siding along the tracks that evening ?

No. There were not many passengers waiting for the 7.15 that evening. There had been the annual Fair in Waterley during the week before, you see, and that had cut down the number of people coming up to the regular weekly market.

Because all their money had been spent at the Fair the week before ?

Well, partly that. Partly because all the stock would be kept up and sold at the Fair. There would be none much for the ordinary market the week after.

But on other market evenings you have known passengers walk along the tracks to the siding ?

Yes. I myself have often seen them.

Simon Creech, farmer, Craxon Moor.—For many years past I have been in the habit of walking from the end of platform 3 across to the slip-coach in the siding, when I would be waiting on market-day to go back to Craxon Moor. No one ever stopped me from doing this. I did not do so on the evening of October 28th last. I went home by the 4.15 on that evening, as there was nothing doing in the town.

Frederick Garland, auctioneer and estate agent, Wulliford.—I attend the market at Waterley on Wednesdays regularly. For several years past when I have been waiting for the 7.15 in the evening, I have

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walked over to the slip-coach in the siding, as it was more comfortable to wait in the coach. I did not do so on the evening of October 28th last. I went home by the 4.15.

Reginald Dundon, 24, solicitor's clerk, North Pier.—I frequently come up from North Pier to Waterley on market-days and on other days during the week, on the business of the firm by whom I am employed. I usually go back by the 7.15. I often walk across from No. 3 platform to the slip-coach in the siding. I did not go up to Waterley on the 28th of October last.

Philip Sexton, porter, Waterley Station.—I have known it as a fairly regular thing for years past for passengers to go along the track to the slip-carriage for the 7.15. I never heard of any objection being raised to them doing it. I did not see anyone do this on the evening of October 28th last.

Amos Sinnott, 32, signalman, East Cabin, Waterley.—I have worked the signals in the East Cabin at Waterley for eighteen months, since June 1924. I remember the evening of October 28th last. It was foggy from 5 p.m. on, sometimes thicker than at other times. It got very thick about 6. It was not so thick at 7, but thick all the same. There was a sharp frost falling that night. I passed in the 6.57 down from Westpool to No. 1 platform. It was two minutes late. It went out for Baynham and Plymouth at 7.9. I passed in the 7.12 up from Plymouth and Baynham to platform 3. It was also two minutes late. That train was then shunted out and picked up the slip-carriage from the Westpool train waiting in the siding. The siding is about 120 yards from my cabin. I had previously seen the slip-carriage come to a stop there.

I could see the slip-carriage fairly distinctly from my cabin.

When you say distinctly, do you mean that you could see the coach itself, or that you could merely see the lighted windows ?

I cannot say, as it was thick. I should say that I saw only the lighted windows that evening. At that time there was only one gas-lamp lighting the siding. The gas-lamp stood at the west end of the siding, above the spring buffers.

When the slip-coach entered the siding and came to a stop there, the compartments were in the same order—taking the buffers as the front end—as they had been when the carriage was attached to the London train. Was that order reversed when the carriage was attached to the North Pier train, or did it remain the same ?

Yes. The engine took the carriage out and then pushed it up behind the other three coaches.

I did not see any persons in or near the siding while the coach was lying there, until the porter came along to couple up the slip-coach. Had there been any person I do not think I should have seen him that evening, if he kept away from the lights a little.

Would you have seen a door of a carriage open ?

I should have seen it if it had been opened on the side visible from my cabin. I did not see any door opened.

Had you seen passengers walk along the line from platform 3 to the slip-coach ?

Frequently.

How often would that happen—say, in a week ?

It might happen perhaps four or five evenings in a week, especially on market-day evenings—Wednesday.

When the slip-coach passed my cabin, running into the siding, I noticed that the blinds of one compartment were all down. I cannot say definitely which compartment.

Did you hear any shout or cry or scream from the direction of the slip-carriage ?

No. There was plenty of shouting going on over in the goods yard. But that was some way off and not in the direction of the siding actually.

Thomas Gannett, porter, Shenstone (recalled).—(*Shown Exhibit 14.*) This is the To-half of return ticket No. 776541 K, from Waterley to Shenstone issued on October 28th last. It has not been checked by the ticket-inspector at Waterley. This ticket was handed to me on the evening of October the 28th, at or about 7.35 on the platform at Shenstone by Captain Ingoldsby. I identify it, because I noticed at the time that it had not been punched.

When did you notice that ?

When I handed in the collected tickets from the 7.29 to the booking-clerk.

When was that ?

About 8 o'clock that evening.

The tickets you collected from passengers by that train remained in your personal possession, then, from the arrival of the train at 7.32 until about 8 o'clock. Was this usual ?

No. Usually I give them up as soon as the North Pier train has gone out. But there was so much excitement that evening that I must have forgotten to give up the tickets until 8 o'clock.

And then you recognised this ticket as the one handed to you by Captain Ingoldsby ?

Yes.

How did you recognise it ?

Because it was not punched.

But you have told us that you didn't see that it hadn't been punched until you gave it up to the booking-clerk ?

No. I didn't notice it until then.

You did not notice, when Captain Ingoldsby—or whoever else gave up this ticket to you—handed it to you, that it had not been punched? You are sure of that?

Well, I may have.

Either you did, or you did not?

I cannot say. I would have looked at his ticket, when he gave it to me and I would have seen that it was not punched.

Let me read what you have stated. "When did you notice that?" I asked you. You replied: "When I handed in the tickets to the booking-clerk."

I cannot say now for certain. But I know that that half-ticket was the one handed to me by Captain Ingoldsby.

But if you had not noticed that the ticket was unpunched when it was given up to you, how could you identify the person who had given it up to you by discovering half an hour later that it was not punched?

I was certain that that was the ticket given up to me by Captain Ingoldsby.

How many first-class return tickets from Waterley to Shenstone—To-halves—were handed to you by passengers off the 7.29 that evening?

Three.

How many first return RETURN halves?

One.

(Exhibits 13 (b), 13 (c), 13 (d) shown to Witness.)

Here are all the other three first-class return ticket halves, "To" and "RETURN," between Waterley and Shenstone handed in by you to the booking-clerk at 8 o'clock that evening. Can you tell us the name of any of the three passengers who gave up these tickets to you?

No.

Can you recall the appearance of any of these three passengers ?

No.

Can you connect any of these three tickets in any way with any passenger who got off that train at Shenstone that evening ?

No.

Then how do you connect this fourth To-half with Captain Ingoldsby ?

Because that ticket has not been punched.

But you did not notice, when it was given up to you, that it had not been punched ?

Witness (angrily).—Anyhow, this is the ticket Captain Ingoldsby gave up to me. There's no doubt at all in my mind about it.

I will leave that. Did Lady Ireland give up any ticket ?

Yes. A first-class return half from Westpool to Shenstone.

Did she hand you this ticket herself ?

No. She wasn't herself. Captain Ingoldsby found it in her bag and handed it to me.

Did he hand his own ticket and Lady Ireland's to you separately or together ?

Separately.

Which did he give you first ?

His own. He got Lady Ireland's ticket out of her bag then.

Look at this ticket which you state was Lady Ireland's ticket. Do you see a mark on one corner ?

Witness.—(*Shown Exhibit II.*) I cannot say what the mark is, nor whether it was on the ticket when Captain Ingoldsby handed it to me.

You did not notice tickets with marks on them as closely as you noticed tickets without marks on them ? Had you injured your hand that day ?

No. Not that I can remember.

It had not been cut in any way ?

No. Not that I know of.

When was this ticket of Lady Ireland's given up to you ? I mean, how long before she left the station ?

Just before she left it. About ten minutes to eight.

How many tickets had been given up to you before this one was given to you ?

This was the first ticket given up to me, except Mr. Theobald's and Captain Ingoldsby's. Mr. Theobald was the first passenger to leave the station. Everyone else waited, until Lady Ireland went away in the Shenstone Castle car.

So that this ticket of Lady Ireland's was the third ticket handed to you, and the unpunched ticket, which you say was Captain Ingoldsby's, was the second ? Will you now look at this unpunched ticket again. Do you observe a reddish-brown mark on the back ?

Yes.

It is similar to the mark on Lady Ireland's ticket, is it not ?—similar, but not so large ?

It appears to be.

Have you any idea what the mark is ? What it was made by ?

No.

You have stated that, while the stationmaster was examining the carriage, you saw blood under one of the seats of the first-class compartment, the seat opposite that in which Sir William Ireland sat. You went down on your knees and looked under the seat ?

Yes.

You felt about with your hands ?

Yes.

At the back, stuck in partially behind the heating-apparatus, you found a penknife—this penknife which you have already identified. The penknife was covered with blood. Was the blood still wet ?

Yes. The blood under the seat was also wet. I may have got some of the blood on to my hands. If I did, and if I noticed it, I would have wiped it off. I cannot say whether I did so or not.

You were excited ?

Well, no, not excited.

You told us there was a lot of excitement, didn't you ?
I wasn't excited, anyhow.

But you can't say if you wiped the blood off your hands ?

No.

Now, you had already collected Mr. Theobald's ticket before you went down on your hands and knees to look under that seat ?

Yes. Mr. Theobald had his ticket in his hand when I woke him up. He opened his hand and I took the ticket out of it.

Here are all the four first-class return tickets from Waterley to Shenstone, taken up at Shenstone from passengers by the 7.29 that evening. There is a mark on one of them—a dark, irregular mark, of a sort of reddish or purplish black or brown. Do you see any such marks on any of the other three tickets of the four ?

No.

Can you say which of those remaining three—the three without marks—was the ticket given up to you by Mr. Theobald ?

No.

But it was one of the three unmarked tickets ?

I can't say.

But you have stated that the ticket with the dark mark, the ticket that was not punched, was the ticket given up by Captain Ingoldsby. Therefore the ticket given up by Mr. Theobald must be one of the three without a dark mark ?

I suppose so.

So that, if you had got blood on to your hand, while you were searching under the seat, some of it might have got on to the two tickets given up by Captain Ingoldsby, because they were the first two tickets collected by you, after finding the knife, were they not ?

Yes.

But none of that blood could have got on Mr. Theobald's ticket, because you collected it before you made search under the seat ?

Witness (examining the tickets).—There are no marks on any tickets taken up off that train except on the two tickets handed to me by Captain Ingoldsby.

Ann Burley, 47, laundress, Shenstone.—Thomas Gannett, the station porter, has been in the habit of sending me his soiled things to wash for some months past. I live next door to his lodgings in the Skittle Alley, No. 12. On October 30th, I called for his wash at No. 12. When I opened it I noticed that one of the three handkerchiefs was heavily stained with blood.

What do you mean by heavily stained ? The whole handkerchief ?

No. Not the whole handkerchief. But there were stains of blood scattered mostly all over it. I thought his nose must have bled. I made that remark to my daughter Winnie at the time.

Did you get the stain out ?

Not very well.

You returned the handkerchief to him ?

I always return everything sent me in a person's washing, and always have done.

Winnie Burley, 19.—I am the daughter of the last witness. I remember her remarking on one morning either the day after Sir William Ireland was found murdered or the day after that, that a handkerchief

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out of Tom Gannett the porter's wash was covered with blood. My mother said he must have had a bleeding of the nose. I thought nothing of it at the time.

Thomas Gannett (recalled).—I do not remember a handkerchief of mine being badly stained with blood, when I made up my washing in a bundle for Mrs. Burley. I do not remember a handkerchief coming back to me from the wash with marks on it. I have made search, but cannot find that I ever had any such handkerchief. I have a motor-cycle. I might use a handkerchief that was no good for anything else, to clean my motor-bike with.

Samuel Ruttle, 40, booking-clerk, Shenstone.—I identify these as the four first-class tickets handed in to me, with the rest, by Gannett on the evening of October 28th last, at a few minutes past eight o'clock. These are the tickets collected by him from passengers alighting at Shenstone from the train arriving at Shenstone at 7.32 that evening. Usually tickets collected are handed in to me immediately the train goes out. In this case there was a delay owing to the circumstances which had arisen. When the slip-coach had been run into the siding, the rest of the train went on to North Pier at 8.15. When Gannett gave me the tickets he gave them to me on the platform outside the waiting-room. He took them from his pocket.

From which pocket?

I cannot remember.

All from one pocket, or some from one pocket and some from another?

I cannot be sure. I think from different pockets.

Did you notice that one To-half of a first-class return ticket between Waterley and Shenstone had not been punched at Waterley?

Gannett directed my attention to it. I also noticed that on two of the tickets there were marks of blood. I made no remark about this to Gannett at the time. I did not ask him which were the tickets given up by Captain Ingoldsby; I went into my office and put the tickets on my desk. Later in the evening I entered up the numbers. I submit the ledger in which I entered them up. The tickets were forwarded by me to the head office by the 10.20 for Waterley that evening. They would go on from Waterley to London that night.

I did not notice any blood on Gannett's hands when he gave me the tickets. My mind was on what had occurred, and Gannett was in a hurry to go out to the siding to keep watch over the slip-coach until the police came.

Thomas Gannett (recalled).—When I gave up the tickets to the booking-clerk I think I took them from my pocket. I can't say which pocket. I cannot say if there were some in one pocket and some in another. I usually carry my handkerchief in my trousers pocket. I cannot say in which pocket it was that evening while these tickets were in my possession, from about 7.35 to 8 o'clock.

Alfred Arkwright, chief clerk, Ticket Department, Paddington.—I identify these tickets as having been received at the head office during the night of October 28th last, by the late up-mail from Westpool. I identify them by the numbers. I submit the ledger in which entry of their receipt was made next day.

Daniel Boobyear, 59, permanent-way man, Waterley.—On the evening of October 28th last, about 6.45 p.m., just before the London train passed, I was taken unwell while working on the main-line up track—the track to

Westpool—about a quarter of a mile outside the East Signal Cabin. I got permission to go home. I walked along by the rails towards the station. I went by the shortest way to where I wanted to go to get to the steps leading down from the embankment to Tip and Run Lane. These steps are on the south-east side of the embankment, about two hundred yards along the Baynham tracks from No. 3 platform. (*Shown Exhibit 12.*) On this plan of the station they are marked "L." I went along the tracks, between the goods yard and the siding, where the slip-carriage was waiting. I was then on the south side of the siding and the slip-carriage. It was then about ten minutes to seven, as close as I can reckon. I saw a man come out from amongst the trucks in the goods yard and walk across to the slip-carriage quickly and get in. I knew it was usual for passengers sometimes to get aboard the slip-carriage in the siding. I saw nothing very unusual about this man's getting in there. I stopped a little way along to light a cigarette and I found that I had no matches. I searched in my pockets for a bit but found none. I looked round then, because I thought I heard footsteps and voices talking not far behind me, somewhere in the goods yard.

There was a good deal of shouting going on in the goods yard?

Yes. But that was a good bit off, near the weigh-yard. These voices were closer.

Much closer?

Yes.

How far from you?

I couldn't say, exactly. I could just hear the voices, not anything that was said. One voice seemed to me to be a woman's voice. She seemed to me to be crying. At first I thought of going back to try to get a match from them, but I did not feel well, so I went on a bit

towards the steps. I was taken bad, and had to sit down on the wall of the embankment for a while. I then saw a man jump out of the slip-coach. He came along the Baynham track, walking very quickly. He passed me going towards the steps down to Tip and Run Lane. I did not speak to him. I could not see him distinctly at any time, but I formed the conclusion that he was the same man I had seen get into the slip-coach. I cannot say where he went to in the end. As far as I can recall he wore a soft hat and an overcoat or a raincoat and leggings. I am sure that he wore leggings. I saw them against the light of the station for a moment as he went by. I was sitting low down. He was tall and, by the way he walked, young. I was feeling so bad that I did not pay a lot of attention to him. He passed about twenty yards in front of me. I suppose I didn't feel I wanted to smoke, then. I did not ask him for a match. After a while I went on home. I was in bed two days with a chill on the liver. I did not notice whether there were any other passengers in the slip-coach as I passed it. But I noticed that the blinds of one compartment were all drawn. I think this was the second or third compartment, not an end one.

You say the man wore leggings. Could you make out anything more of his clothes, clearly ?

His hat was a soft hat, not a cap, I think. I could not say whether he was wearing chauffeur's livery.

On November 11th I picked out two men at Saltash Police Station. I thought either of them might have been the man I saw.

Look at this man attentively (Henry Hopgood).

That is one of the two men I picked out at Saltash Station.

Look at this man (David Beechinor). Does this man resemble the man you saw ?

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Yes. He's not unlike him in his shape. I wouldn't like to say for certain that either of them was the man I saw.

Captain Neville Bathe Ingoldsby, 29.—I hold the rank of Captain in the Westshire Light Infantry. I belong to the second battalion and since July last have been stationed at the Depot at Waterley. On the evening of October 28th last, I decided about six o'clock to go down to North Pier, where there was to be a night-bombing stunt by the R.A.F. people from the Aerodrome at Waterley. My car was not running well, and it was very foggy, that is why I decided to go down by train. I decided to go down by the 7.15. I went to the station from the barracks by the shortest way, across the river, up Tip and Run Lane, and up on to the embankment by the steps, and along the tracks. I went along to the platform—No. 1 on this plan of the station—and out to the booking-office. I purchased a first-return for North Pier. I then waited for a moment or two on the platform. It was a wretched, raw evening, and I saw the slip-coach waiting out in the siding. I walked out along the tracks and got into it.

Had you previously done this, at any time ?

Yes. Two or three times.

When ?

During the summer, going down to North Pier in the evenings.

But in the summer you would go down by road in your car, wouldn't you ?

Not necessarily. My bus is always getting out of order.

So you had done this before. You knew that the slip-carriage waited out in the siding to be joined on to the North Pier train, and that you could walk out

along the tracks from the end of platform 1 and get into it, and wait there comfortably ?

Yes.

When you had bought your ticket you passed in on to platform 1 again ?

Yes.

You showed your ticket to the ticket-collector at the entrance ?

I believe so.

Did he punch it ?

I believe so.

You do not remember definitely ?

I'm pretty sure he did. I'm sure I showed it to him.

The 6.59 had just got in from Westpool to No. 1 platform ?

Some train had just come in to No. 1 platform, yes.

The alighting passengers were passing out by the entrance you came on to the platform by ?

Yes.

Were there many ?

Oh, about the usual little rush.

You might have passed the inspector, in the rush, without his asking to see your ticket ?

I might have, of course. I can't say, really, at all.

At what time did you purchase your ticket at the booking-office ?

I cannot say, exactly. Some time about seven o'clock. I was in very good time, I remember.

Have you any reason for giving the hour seven ? Might it not have been 7.5 or 7.7 or 7.10, just as well ?

No. I remember that I was early and that I had a good long time to wait before the train went out. That is why I went out to the slip-carriage in the siding.

There is a clock facing the booking-office at Waterley Station. Did you happen to see it that evening, while you were purchasing your ticket ?

S.-C.M.

G

Yes. I believe I did.

Can you recollect what time that clock showed ?

As well as I remember, seven o'clock. I cannot be accurate to a minute or two.

Would it surprise you to hear that the clock had stopped that afternoon at five minutes to five, and was not set right until after eight o'clock ?

Witness (smiling).—Just my luck.

What do you mean by " Just your luck ? "

I mean that if I think I looked at a clock and that it was seven o'clock by it, I'm safe to find out that the clock was out of action.

Did you wear a wrist-watch that evening ?

Yes.

Can you remember looking at it ?

No. I knew *it* had stopped. It always has. I am of opinion that, somehow, I knew I had plenty of time to wait.

You say that you came from the barracks to the station by Tip and Run Lane. Did you meet any person in Tip and Run Lane ?

No. I know a small cottage, not far from the embankment, at the side of the river. There is a gate leading into the field or marsh near the cottage. I did not see any car inside the gate nor anywhere else along the lane. It was very foggy down there by the river.

You say that you came up the steps from Tip and Run Lane on to the embankment. You walked to No. 1 platform. In doing so you passed the siding marked " S," leaving it about ninety or a hundred yards to your right hand ?

Witness (looking at plan of station).—Yes.

Was the slip-carriage in the siding then ?

No.

You could see the two bays of the station. Was any train standing in either of them then ?

No.

You looked to see ?

Naturally. When one is walking about a junction on the rails, one keeps one's eyes open for trains.

Let us go on now to your return trip—when you were walking out along the rails to the slip-carriage. This, you say, was at seven or a little after. Was any train in the station at the time ?

Yes. There was a train over at No. 1 platform.

That was the train which had just come in from Westpool, dropping the slip-coach outside the station, and was going on down to Baynham ?

I presume so.

From platform No. 1—the end of it, I mean—could you see the lamp out at the siding where the slip-coach waited ?

I can't say. It was a bit thick that evening.

Could you see from the end of the platform the lights of the slip-carriage ?

Yes, I saw the slip-carriage running along into the siding, and stopping there.

While you were still on the platform ?

No. When I was about half-way out to the siding. It had stopped when I reached the siding. It was going very slowly when I saw it first. I climbed up into the carriage on the side nearer the goods yard—I would not have been visible to anyone in the East Signal Cabin. I got up on the far side of the carriage from the Cabin. I went and took a seat in the front third-class compartment.

That was a third-class compartment—the one then nearest to the siding-buffers and afterwards nearest to the engine of the North Pier train ?

Yes. I had a first-class ticket. The reason that I went and sat in a third-class compartment was that I saw that the blinds of the one first-class compartment

were all drawn down. I half opened the door of the compartment and saw that Sir William Ireland was dozing in a corner of it. Lady Ireland was sitting opposite to him, reading a newspaper. Not wishing to disturb Sir William, I apologised and went on to the third-class compartment. There was no one in the second compartment—*i.e.* that is the one between mine and Sir William's. I had seen Mr. Theobald in the other end compartment, asleep. He was alone. I know him. I have shot frequently and so forth at Shenstone Castle as Sir William's guest. I do not, however, know him at all intimately.

Will you tell us, in your own way, what happened after that ?

I had received a claim for income-tax that afternoon, by post. Not having had time to look at it, I had put it aside. Before leaving barracks I had put it into my pocket, and I took it out then, to look through it, because I thought I had paid all tax due by me for 1924-25. Lady Ireland came along the corridor-passage to my compartment to ask me whether my Colonel—Colonel Pitt-Saunderson—and his wife had returned from Scotland, where they had gone to stay with some friends for a week. She wanted to ask them to dine at Shenstone Castle one day in the following week. She asked me also to dine there on that evening. We talked about various things for a little while.

Were you an intimate friend of Sir William Ireland's ?

Far otherwise. He asked me—on general principles—to Shenstone Castle occasionally, and, I think, just endured me ?

Had you known Lady Ireland before her marriage ?

Oh yes, quite well. We were children together.

So that when you met, you had plenty to say to one another ?

Oh yes. The usual rot and so forth.

On that evening in the end third-class compartment of the slip-coach nearest the buffers, you chatted with her while the coach waited for the train ?

Yes.

While the coach was being coupled to the engine ?

Yes.

While it was being taken out by the engine to the train and coupled on ?

I suppose so. I can't remember that I noticed.

Did your conversation with Lady Ireland continue after the train had actually got into motion ?

Oh yes. For some time after that.

About how long after that ?

Oh, I should say, perhaps five or ten minutes.

You understand, don't you, that minutes are of considerable importance in this matter ?

I should say about ten minutes—about half-way to Shenstone.

From Waterley to Shenstone is a run of fourteen minutes. You estimate, however, that Lady Ireland remained in the front third-class compartment talking to you for about ten minutes: ten minutes after the train actually started—or ten minutes altogether ?

I should say ten minutes altogether.

At what time did you reach the compartment of the carriage in which you seated yourself, when you climbed up in to it ?

About five minutes past seven. I cannot be accurate to a minute.

Please be as accurate as you can. You then looked at your income-tax claim for some little time. For how long ?

Oh, two or three minutes. It was not very alluring reading.

That brings us, say, to 7.7. Then Lady Ireland

came along to your compartment, and remained chatting there to you for ten minutes—approximately. That brings us, approximately, to 7.17. Now the North Pier train went out of the station at 7.17 or 7.18. We know that from the stationmaster's statement, corroborated by the signalman's in the East Cabin. The train did not arrive at Shenstone until 7.32. If you and Lady Ireland continued to chat until the journey was about half-completed, you would have chatted until about 7.25, approximately. That is to say, your conversation with her—in the train—would have lasted from 7.7 to 7.25—about fifteen minutes?

I do not think it lasted so long as that. I should say about ten minutes altogether.

We will try to get at it another way. How long before the train stopped at Shenstone was it that Lady Ireland's chat with you ended, and that she left the compartment?

About ten minutes, I should say. I really have no accurate idea. You've got to remember what happened during the time after our conversation.

Well, we will take it that your conversation with her—that is, your first conversation with her—lasted until about 7.25. Is that pretty nearly correct?

I have told you that I have no accurate memory. My watch was stopped. In any case one does not keep looking at one's watch while one is talking to a lady.

Not always, I admit. But, approximately, it was at 7.25 that Lady Ireland left your compartment and went back to the compartment in which, from fifteen to eighteen minutes before—these appear to be the limits—she had left her husband alive and dozing peacefully. What happened then?

I heard a cry, or a sound of someone very badly frightened. I jumped up and went to the door of my compartment and listened. Lady Ireland rushed out

of the first-class compartment, and I went towards her to meet her. She said, "My God! Nevvy, something terrible has happened to my husband. He's all covered with blood. I can't get him to open his eyes." I went into the first-class compartment and looked at Sir William. I saw that his neck was covered with wet blood, which had flowed down his coat-collar, and over the cushions, and, some of it, on to the floor of the carriage. I did not touch him so as to change his position. I shook his arms and shouted at him, until I saw that he was unconscious or dead. I couldn't say which. I went back to Lady Ireland and I saw that she was going to faint. I caught her by the arm and took her back to my compartment. She was in a state of hysterics, crying and laughing and talking at the top of her voice. I was afraid that the shock had been too much for her, and that she was going to have an attack of hysterics or nerves or something. She fainted two or three times—that is to say, she collapsed on the seat of the carriage and seemed to be unconscious. After a little while she got a little better, and I went back and examined her husband again and tried his pulse. I felt sure, then, that he was dead.

At first I thought of pulling the communication cord, but, as the train was going to stop in a few minutes, there seemed no use in doing that. So I went back to Lady Ireland.

Where had she been in the interval?

In my compartment.

Did you awaken or try to awaken the passenger in the end compartment—Mr. Theobald?

No. I never thought about him.

You knew that he was in the end compartment?

Yes, but I didn't think he could be any help.

Why not?

Well, I fancied that he was half-screwed. I hate

saying so, but he looked it. He couldn't have done anything, anyhow. I believe I did say "Theobald——" but he didn't wake up.

Did you notice anything about the appearance of the carriage which might have thrown any light upon Sir William's condition ?

No.

Were any doors open ?—that is to say, any door by which anyone could have got in or out of the carriage ?

No.

Had you heard any sound while Lady Ireland was talking to you in your compartment ? Any cry or exclamation or moan ?

No.

There was an inner door to each compartment of the carriage—a door opening into the corridor passage ?

Yes.

While Lady Ireland was in your compartment was that door of your compartment shut ?

Yes.

The window was open. There would have been too great a draught if we had left the door open also.

You always have a reason for what you do ?

I try to.

When you first got into the carriage, was this door—the inner door opening into the corridor—open in Sir William's compartment ?

No. I opened it for a moment, intending to enter the first-class compartment. I changed my mind and shut it again.

Do you know whether Lady Ireland left it open when she came along the corridor to your compartment the first time ?

I don't know. She didn't say.

Was the corridor door of Mr. Theobald's compartment open or shut when you got into the carriage first ?

Open.

Did you see any brown paper parcel in his hand or lying on the seat near him ?

No.

Or on the seat facing him ?

No.

Did you see any such parcel in Lady Ireland's hand at any time that evening ?

No. I can't remember any.

Try to be sure, please ?

I am trying. I cannot remember any.

When you went back to Lady Ireland after your second visit to Sir William's carriage, what was her condition ?

She had recovered a little, but she was still in a state of collapse. She was quite hysterical.

Did she make any suggestion to explain her husband's condition or how his injuries could have been inflicted ?

No. None. She kept saying: "Who can have done it?" "Do you think he could have done it himself?" "He couldn't possibly have done it to himself, could he?" and things like that. She was quite confused and stupefied. I was horribly knocked about myself.

Did you yourself form any idea, then, as to how Sir William had received the injuries which you had observed ?

No. I couldn't think. I saw, of course, that, however he had come by them, they must have been inflicted while Lady Ireland was up in front talking to me. Of course, if anyone had wanted to kill Sir William, he could easily have got into the carriage while it was waiting—before the porter came along. There would have been tons of time. He could have attacked Sir William and killed him, as far as that

goes, in half a minute, and got clear away, if Sir William was dozing when he attacked him. At any rate, that was all I could think had happened. Of course it occurred to me that someone might have been hidden in the lavatory-compartment, at the far end of the carriage—behind the compartment where Mr. Theobald was. Of course I can't say as to that.

While you had been stationed at the Depot at Waterley—since July of last year—you had been visiting Shenstone Castle very frequently, had you not ?

Pretty often, yes. Both Sir William and Lady Ireland were very kind in asking the officers of the Depot down there.

During the summer you were going down there nearly every afternoon for tennis ?

I played a good deal of tennis down there, yes. So did most of my brother officers.

Look at this document, please. (*Witness shown Exhibit 18.*) Is that your signature ?

Yes.

It is a promissory note, dated August 5th, 1925, undertaking to pay Louis Gandy £300, on or before November 5th, 1925, and renewed on payment of interest at intervals of three months, since—on Nov. 4th, Feb. 5th, and so on. You have not been able to pay off the principal in eighteen months or so ?

No. It has not been cancelled. Gandy has always been willing to renew.

On or about August 6th, did you purchase from Messrs. Cramer, in Bond Street, a ring set with an emerald and five small diamonds for £250 ?

Yes.

Was that ring sent, at your direction, by Messrs. Cramer to Lady Ireland ?

Yes.

August 7th is Lady Ireland's birthday. Was it sent to her as a birthday present ?

Yes.

You admired Lady Ireland greatly ?

I do. I always have done so. It happens to most people who know her.

But not everyone would borrow £300 from a money-lender in order to buy Lady Ireland an emerald and diamond ring, would they ?

Suppose we keep to facts. I'm not a psychologist.

I congratulate you. At all events, your admiration for the lady induced you to this very considerable expenditure upon a birthday present, and persuaded you to borrow from a moneylender at a hundred and twenty per cent. to do it. Now I must ask you this question. Was there at any time anything in the nature of a flirtation between you and this lady ?

No.

Had there ever been anything of the kind between you ?

No. We knew one another very well as kids.

But there was nothing on your side—no feeling stronger than friendship and admiration ?

None. I've always been very fond of Lady Ireland, and I expect I always shall be so.

You have stated that you purchased at Waterley a first-class return ticket to North Pier and back. Can you explain why you gave up at Shenstone Station a first-class return ticket from Waterley to Shenstone—that is to say, the "To" half of a return ticket between those two stations—unpunched at Waterley ?

I am not aware that I did anything of the kind. That is to say, I gave up two tickets—one was Lady Ireland's, which I took out of her bag for her: the other was my own, the ticket I had bought at Waterley. It had been punched at Waterley when I went on to

the platform. I know nothing of an unpunched ticket. I did not give up this ticket. (*Shown Exhibit 14.*)

Are you aware that no first-class return half-ticket from Waterley to North Pier was amongst the tickets given up at Shenstone by passengers by that train?

If that is stated, it must be untrue. The ticket I gave up was a return Waterley to North Pier—the Waterley-North Pier half.

What became of the other half of that ticket?—the unused return half from North Pier to Waterley?

I don't know. It must have got mislaid somehow. At any rate, I never gave it up anywhere. I did not use it going back to Waterley that night. I went back by road.

Have you made search for it?

Yes. Very careful search.

Would it surprise you to hear that all the tickets, single and return, issued at Waterley, to North Pier on that day, October 28th, were given up at North Pier and Waterley, and duly checked by the Company's officials, and that no return half is missing?

I cannot understand how that is—unless I gave up my return half sometime or other at Waterley afterwards. I was at the station several times on the following day, October 29th, receiving drafts of recruits. I may have thought of it, and given it up then.

Can you account, however, for the fact that a first-class return ticket between Waterley and Shenstone, issued on the evening of that day, is missing, and that neither half was given up to any official of the Company?

I have nothing to do with that.

You can suggest no explanation?

No.

How did you return to Waterley from Shenstone on the night of October 28th?

By road, in one of the Shenstone Castle cars.

Who drove you back to Waterley?

Mr. Burchall.

When you gave up your ticket and Lady Ireland's at Shenstone, to whom did you give them ?

To the porter, Gannett.

Both together ?

No. I gave up my own first. Then I asked Lady Ireland for hers. She pointed to her bag, and I took the ticket out of it.

At what time did you give these tickets up to Gannett ?

Some time after the train had stopped.

Where did you give them up ?

In the waiting-room, I believe.

Did you notice this dark mark on your ticket when you gave it up ?

No.

Or the mark on Lady Ireland's ticket ?

No.

Did you find any stains anywhere on your clothes or on any of the contents of any of your pockets afterwards ?

No. I did not touch any place on Sir William's overcoat where there was blood.

Dudley Burchall, 34.—I am the stepson of the late Sir William Ireland. Before his marriage to his first wife, she had been married to the late Sir George Burchall, my father, who died in 1903. My elder brother, Philip, succeeded then to the title and the property. He is still alive. Upon my mother's marriage to Sir William Ireland, I went to live at Shenstone Castle. I have lived there, more or less, ever since—except, of course, during the war—or at my mother's house in Chelsea. That house was left to me by my mother upon her death. I sold it some years ago.

No change was made in the arrangement upon my stepfather's second marriage. I have an income of £500 a year of my own from my father's estate, and, in addition, Sir William made me an allowance of £400 a year.

Upon what terms were you with your stepfather?

Very good terms. He always treated me with the greatest consideration and generosity.

But there were difficulties at times?

He was a man of very decided character. He was devoted to his businesses, and his parliamentary work, meetings, and work on committees and so on. I'm afraid I must always have appeared to him rather a slacker. I never had anything to do with the Westpool Foundry or with the Factory at Waterley. As a matter of fact, he preferred that I should not. He used always to say that it was a great mistake for relatives to have anything to do with one another in business. I assisted Mr. Theobald in the management of the estate—I have always been very keen about country pursuits. I used to arrange about the shooting-parties, and give my stepmother a hand with the arrangements for entertaining and so on. I think I can say that I always got on excellently with Sir William, considering that he was an exacting and difficult-tempered man.

You are somewhat extravagant in your tastes?

I fear so.

You attend all the big race meetings, I think?

Everyone does that.

Everyone who does, loses money, I understand. You have done so?

Only too often.

Is it the fact that, in addition to the allowance of £400 a year which Sir William was in the habit of making you, he has during the past four years paid you large sums of money to clear your racing debts?

Well—large—— That depends. I suppose I have

had £300-£400 a year from him in addition to my allowance.

Have you also borrowed money from Lady Ireland ?

Yes. Lady Ireland has very kindly lent me money at times.

How much money have you borrowed from her during the past four years ?

I can't say accurately.

Suppose I tell you that I have here cancelled cheques of Lady Ireland's extending over the last four years, showing payments to you of a total sum of nearly £2900—that is to say, on an average, over £700 a year.

That may quite possibly be accurate. She has been the soul of generosity and kindness. I'm bound to say that I've dropped a lot of money this last year, at any rate.

How much ?

Somewhere round two thou, I'm afraid. I expect I've had about £800 from Lady Ireland within the past six months.

As a matter of fact you have had over £900. On the afternoon of October 28th you went up to Westpool and had an interview with Sir William Ireland in his office at the Foundry ?

Yes.

How did you go up from Shenstone Castle ?

By car.

What clothes were you wearing ?

Tweeds—— The ordinary things I wear about the estate.

Be as exact as possible, please.

I wore a soft fawn felt hat, a Burberry, brown tweeds, fawn riding-breeches and leggings.

(Here the witnesses, Charles White and Daniel Boob-year, were separately confronted with Burchall. Both stated that he bore some resemblance in height and

figure to the men they had seen respectively, but both declined to express any more definite opinion.)

Lady Ireland was also present at your interview with Sir William ?

Yes.

Will you tell us what occurred ?

Sir William had discovered that Lady Ireland had been lending me money, and he kicked up a bit of a fuss about it. That was all.

Had Lady Ireland told him that she had been lending you money ?

Yes.

When ?

A couple of days before that.

She had been lending you considerable sums of money for four years. Had she told Sir William previously that she had been lending you money ?

I don't know. No. I don't think she had told him.

Can you tell us why, when she had been silent as to these loans for four years, she suddenly elected to tell Sir William of them ?

He had found out, somehow, that she had been lending me money.

And then he questioned her ?

Yes.

And she admitted the truth ?

Well—admitted is hardly the word. She was perfectly at liberty to lend me money if she chose to do so.

Was that Sir William's opinion also ?

Oh, he just made a bit of a fuss because I'd been losing a lot of money just before that.

What was the upshot of the interview ?

He warned me that I should have to cut down my

expenditure. Also he said that if he found that I was borrowing any more money from Lady Ireland he would stop the allowance he made me.

How long did the conversation last ?

About half an hour.

Was any other matter discussed besides your money affairs ?

Oh yes, we talked about a lot of things.

Your interview took place just after Mr. Theobald had been in to see Sir William ?

Yes. Shortly after. Theobald had just gone away when I got to the Foundry.

Was any reference made to Mr. Theobald's proposed dismissal from the post of agent ?

Yes. There was some talk about that. Lady Ireland and I both said that we thought it would be a great mistake to put Mr. Theobald out of a job he had done—and done well—for seventeen years or so. Sir William was very stiff about it. He had apparently made up his mind to dismiss Mr. Theobald.

Was anything said then as to who was to replace Mr. Theobald in the post ?

No. Sir William wouldn't tell us whom he had in his mind.

He told you that he actually had some particular person in his mind ?

He conveyed that to us, yes. I believe, in fact, that he said so.

But he did not mention the name ?

No.

Did you ask him to ?

Several times.

Had you, personally, any idea whom he had in his mind ?

Not the faintest. The thing came to me as a complete surprise.

S.-C.M.

H

Was the discussion with Sir William about this matter perfectly amicable ?

Oh yes, amicable. Our views were very strong about Mr. Theobald's dismissal—and so were Sir William's. Of course, he was the man to say Yes or No—it was his estate—and his job to give to whomever he wanted to give it to.

Did you not suggest that, rather than that Mr. Theobald should leave the post, you should become definitely responsible for the discharge of some of his duties ?

Yes. I suggested that.

What did Sir William say to that ?

He wouldn't agree to that.

Did he not say that he would see you in hell rather than give you another penny of his money ?

I do not remember his saying that. He was always liable to use bad language.

You have told us that he had merely threatened to cut off the allowance of £400, which he made you, if he found that you borrowed any more money from Lady Ireland. Is this the fact ?

Yes.

Did he not tell you that you would not receive another penny of his money ?

He talked vaguely to that effect, but I didn't believe for a moment that there was anything in it except talk.

Is it not the fact that, during all the half-hour for which you were shut up with him and Lady Ireland in his office that afternoon, your conversation was not merely extremely angry, but most violent in tone ?

No. That is not true. It is an entire exaggeration. Sir William always spoke in a loud, curt voice. He was one of those men who appear to have been born annoyed about things. But it really sounded much worse than it meant.

Douglas Carmichael, secretary to Sir William Ireland (recalled).—On the afternoon of October 28th, Mr. Dudley Burchall came into Sir William Ireland's office at the Foundry a little before four o'clock. Lady Ireland was already in Sir William's office. I had previously received instructions to go into the safe-compartment opening off Sir William's office. That was before Lady Ireland was shown into the office. My instructions were to remain in the safe-room until I was called and to pay particular attention to anything that might be said in the office.

From the safe-room you could hear what was said in the office ?

Absolutely distinctly.

What matters were discussed at the conversation which then took place in the office ?

First, Mr. Theobald's dismissal from the post of agent. Then Mr. Dudley Burchall's racing debts and his borrowing money from Lady Ireland. Then the relations between Lady Ireland and Mr. Burchall.

What was the tone of the conversation ?

I should say, violently angry.

All through, or in places ?

All through. At the end, just before Mr. Burchall and Lady Ireland went away, the noise of the voices in the office was so loud that it was perfectly audible to the clerks in the outer offices across the yard.

When you say "violently angry," what precisely do you mean ? On which side was the anger ?

On both sides.

Tell us briefly how the conversation proceeded ?

Lady Ireland and Mr. Burchall began about Mr. Theobald's dismissal. They were both very angry about it, and said that it was a shame that he should be dismissed after so many years, and that it would be impossible to get as good a man for the post. Sir

William said that Mr. Theobald was a drunken old potterer and that he would have dismissed him long before if he had really known what was going on behind his back. There was a lot of angry discussion about this. Then they branched off to Mr. Burchall's debts, and to his borrowing money from Lady Ireland. The discussion about this was also extremely angry. Then Sir William accused Mr. Burchall of haunting Lady Ireland, and being always with her. "Haunting" was the word he used. He suggested that there had been intimate relations between Lady Ireland and Mr. Burchall. I should not go as far as to say that he suggested criminal relations, but there is no doubt in my mind that he knew, or suspected, that matters had taken a serious course between them.

Did he allege any particular incident of the sort ?

Yes. I gathered that he had seen something the night before. I heard him say to Lady Ireland: "Do you think I don't know that you two were out in the grounds last night, after the servants had gone to bed? You were out there together for two hours." That was just before Mr. Burchall and Lady Ireland went away. I thought at the time that Mr. Burchall was on the point of physical violence by the sound of his voice. He and Lady Ireland went away laughing, but very angry. When they had gone, and I came out of the safe-room, Sir William was so overcome that I had to get him some spirits.

Overcome? By anger?

Yes. I should say, by anger, and by the way in which Lady Ireland and Mr. Burchall had spoken to him.

Lady Ireland then took an active part in the conversation?

Yes.

Did she make any reply to the charges which Sir William had made?

Counsel for Lady Ireland.—I object to that question.

Examining Counsel.—It is a material point.

Counsel for Lady Ireland.—This witness's statements are almost altogether uncorroborated. Lady Ireland is not on trial, either for infidelity to her husband or for his murder.

Examining Counsel.—Very well. (Examination resumed.) Your impression was that all three parties at the conversation were very angry when it terminated?

Yes. Very angry indeed.

Dudley Burchall (recalled).—At what time did you leave Sir William's office?

About half-past four or a little later.

Where did you go then?

Lady Ireland had some shopping to do in Westpool. I accompanied her. We then went and had tea at the Three Feathers Restaurant. Lady Ireland met some friends there. I left her with them and went back to Shenstone by road in my car.

Your car had been garaged?

No. I had parked it in the parking place in Wine Tavern Square.

Was there anyone in charge of the parking place?

No. There never is.

At what time did you leave Westpool?

About half-past six, I should say.

At what time did you reach Shenstone?

Some time round half-past seven.

You cannot be more accurate?

No. It may have been a quarter to eight. There was a lot of fog along the way. I had to drive very carefully.

What is the distance from Westpool to Shenstone?

Thirty-eight miles.

You drove thirty-eight miles on a foggy night in an hour or a little more ?

I usually get down from Westpool to Shenstone in five minutes under the hour.

When you arrived at Shenstone Castle what did you do ?

I did not go on up to the Castle then. I had some things to settle up at the estate office. I went there, and worked until about 8.30. As I was leaving, someone who was passing—the schoolmaster, I believe—stopped and told me that Sir William had been found dead in the train. I then went on up to the Castle. I got there about twenty to nine or so.

What is the registration number of your car ?

RL 9927. It is a Sunbeam two-seater, dark blue.

Did you bring down any parcels in your car that evening to Shenstone ?

Yes. I picked up two cases of cartridges from Messrs. Elcom in Waterley, on my way up to Westpool.

Were the parcels labelled ?

They may have been.

If they were labelled, to whom would they have been addressed ? To you ?

No. Either to Mr. Theobald or Sir William Ireland. They were for general use on the estate. I had written Messrs. Elcom that the cartridges would be called for. In the case of their being labelled, it is probable that the words, "To be called for," might have been written on the labels by Messrs. Elcom as a note for themselves.

While you were in the estate office, did any other person enter the building ?

No. Not that I know of. There is a man who cleans up. But I believe he goes away at six o'clock. He has a key. I have one. Mr. Theobald had one. and Sir William had one. I left the car standing in

the drive going up to the office, to save the necessity of keeping my lights going.

Would it have been visible there to any person passing along the road ?

I expect not.

Can you give us the name of any person who can testify as to your whereabouts from twenty-five minutes to six, when you left the Three Feathers Restaurant in Westpool, until eight-forty or eight-forty-five, when you arrived at Shenstone Castle and put your car into the garage there ?

No. I don't think so.

Did you stop in Waterley on your way down ?

No.

At what time did you pass through Waterley ?

About a quarter past seven, I should say. I cannot be more accurate. There is a clock in the dash of my car. I seldom or never look at it.

Were you at any time on that evening in the vicinity of Waterley Railway Station ?

No. I passed along Fore Street, going out of the town, and of course passed the end of the approach to the station. But I was no nearer to the station than that.

Do you know Tip and Run Lane ?

I know where it is.

Did you leave your car standing in Tip and Run Lane, near the railway embankment, at any time that evening ?

No.

Marius Lahn, rag and bottle dealer, Tip and Run Lane, Waterley.—On the evening of October 28th last, about a quarter to seven, I left my house in Tip and Run Lane intending to go with my barrow to collect a load of old newspapers and bottles from Mrs. Tasker

47 Fore Street. I fix the date and the hours by my book. I had an appointment to call for the stuff at a quarter past seven o'clock, because it was to be ready to take away at that hour. There is a gate near my house opening into the waste ground along the river there. I often leave my barrow there when I am going out again the same day, because it's a bit troublesome to get it into the shed behind my house, where my stuff is stored. It was very foggy that night along the marsh beside the river. When I opened the gate I found that my barrow had been moved a bit further into the field and that there was a motor-car standing just inside the gate. None of the lights were on. I couldn't get my barrow out without moving it. I was in the M.T. during the war. I switched the lights on and started up the engine and got the car out of the way. I turned the lights off again, and shut the gate when I had taken my barrow out. I saw no one about. The car had gone when I got back with my load about eight o'clock. The car was a new Sunbeam two-seater. The registration number was RL double nine something. I cannot be sure of the last two figures.

The gate where the car was is directly opposite my house. Tip and Run Lane runs out of the Baynham main road, near Puzzleden Bridge, and runs from there along the river up to the railway embankment. It ends there. There is a rubbish-dump there, but no passage under the embankment. There are steps going up to the top of the embankment. They are supposed to be used only by the railway people. A good many of them live at the other end of Tip and Run Lane. But often people use them for a short-cut to the station or the upper part of the town, going along the rails and down by the steps into Welde Road. From the gate to the steps would be about a hundred yards or so—not more.

While you were in the car, moving it away from the gate, did you see any parcels in the car ?

There were two parcels on the seat. I had the curiosity to look at the labels on them, because I wondered who had left a car in such a place. They were two parcels of cartridges from Elcom's in the High Street, and on the labels was written " Sir William Ireland, Shenstone Castle, Shenstone "—with " To be called for " in pencil.

How did you fix the name in your memory ?

I have to remember names in my business. I don't employ a secretary, you see. Next day, when I read about Sir William Ireland of Shenstone Castle being found murdered in the train, of course I thought it queer the car should have been there in the field so near the embankment. Anyone could have got to the siding where the slip-coach was in a few minutes from where the car stood. I did not go to the police until about three weeks later. I didn't want to be mixed up in anything. It's hard enough for a chap like me to get on if he minds his own business.

Cross-examined.—You have reason to wish to keep clear of the police ?

No more than anyone else with sense.

In 1921 you got two months for assault with violence ?
Yes.

In 1922 you got three months for violent assault upon Constable L 73 in the High Street of Waterley ?

Yes.

In 1924 you were sentenced to six months' imprisonment in connection with a burglary at North Hill ?

Yes.

In 1924, 5, and 6 you have been sentenced seven times for drunkenness and obstruction ?

Yes. Once the Waterley police get on to you, you haven't much chance to live.

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On the evening of October 28th, were you sober at seven o'clock?

Yes. As sober as a judge.

I put it to you that you had been drunk all that day, and that you were drunk when you left your house at a quarter to seven, and that you were so drunk when you arrived at Mrs. Tasker's house that you threw the old newspapers all over her yard and smashed an entire box of bottles while you were trying to lift them into your barrow?

Anyone may have an accident of that sort in a bad light.

I suggest to you that the story of having seen a motor-car in the field near the embankment is a myth—an invention of your own drunken imagination. I suggest that you wanted to curry favour with the police, because you were in bad odour with them. If you had seen a car in that place, and seen in it parcels addressed to Sir William Ireland, why did you not inform the police the next day?

Because I didn't want to have anything to do with it I have not the book I then made a note of my appointments in. I have searched but cannot find it.

Mrs. Tasker, 47 Fore Street.—On the evening of October 28th last, Lahn came to my house to take away some old papers and bottles. He was to have come on the afternoon of the day before—the afternoon of October 27th. He was drunk when he came on the evening of October 28th. He threw newspapers all over my yard and fell down when he tried to pick them up. He let a whole box of bottles smash in the yard.

I did not have any conversation with him then. I have never employed him since. He arrived at my house about half-past seven.

Marius Lahn (recalled).—Did you say anything concerning the motor-car to any person on the evening of October 28th ?

Yes. I told my wife and my son.

Maria Lahn, 42.—I am the wife of the preceding witness. On the evening of October 28th last he was perfectly sober. He went out at 6.45, having an appointment in Fore Street for a quarter past seven in his book. He always entered up his appointments in his book, and still does. I cannot say what has become of the last book he had, the one he entered the appointment in. When he came back that night he told me and my son about a motor-car being inside the gate opposite our house. In the morning me and my son saw the tracks of a car in the mud, as plain as your face. Me and my son said to him he had better go and see the police about it, but he wouldn't go, because of the way the police had always treated him. In the end me and my son kept at him and got him to go to the police.

Karl Lahn, 18.—I am the son of Marius Lahn. I corroborate the statement made by my mother, Maria Lahn. My father was perfectly sober on that night. I cannot say what became of the book in which he had the appointment with Mrs. Tasker entered up.

Alfred Tripp, 62, salesman, Messrs. Elcom & Co., High Street, Waterley.—On October 28th last, about three o'clock in the afternoon, I handed to Mr. Dudley Burchall two parcels containing sporting cartridges of various makes, ordered by Mr. Theobald, agent to the late Sir William Ireland, on October 25th. I produce Mr. Theobald's letter and our books covering the transaction. Mr. Theobald had informed us that either he

or Mr. Burchall would be in Waterley in the course of the week and would call for the cartridges. The order was made up in two parcels, and labelled to Sir William Ireland, with a note that they would be called for. I wrote that note on the labels myself.

In pencil ?

In indelible pencil, yes.

James Dude, 32, chauffeur.—I was employed as second chauffeur at Shenstone Castle from January 1923 until the end of October last. I left my employment there because I got married in October, and I was told by Mr. Theobald that it did not suit having a married man a chauffeur.

Whom did you marry ?

I married Janet Hardiman.

Was she also employed at Shenstone Castle ?

Yes. She was employed as parlour-maid.

Do you remember the night of October 27th last—the night before Sir William Ireland's death ?

Yes.

Will you tell us in your own words what you witnessed that night in the grounds ?

I had been out pretty late with Sir William and Lady Ireland that night ; they had been dining at Blackhall Place, and we didn't get back until nearly twelve. At that time I was paying my attentions to Janet Hardiman. When I had had some supper in my room over the garage, I went up across the garden to the house—she had arranged to wait up to see me for a moment when I got in. I went quietly, because the ground was frosty and I was wearing heavy boots. When I got near the hothouses, I saw Sir William standing behind the corner of one of them. He seemed to be watching. I stopped, because I didn't want him to know I was there. After a little bit a match was

struck in another of the glasshouses a bit nearer the house, and someone lighted a cigarette. I could see the end of the cigarette. I guessed it was the mistress and Mr. Burchall. We all knew that they used to go out and sit in one of the hothouses at night. It was about ten minutes or so before I managed to get down on my knees and crawl back along the grass. Sir William was still where I saw him first when I last saw him. He was wearing a hat and a muffler and an overcoat. I could see him distinctly from where I was. His back was towards me, but I could not have been mistaken.

Cross-examined.—You were dismissed for gross impertinence to Lady Ireland, were you not?

No. Because I had got married without permission, was the reason Mr. Theobald gave me.

Is it not the case that you demanded an increase of wages from Mr. Theobald, that he refused, that you then went to Lady Ireland; and that when she refused to deal with a matter which Mr. Theobald had decided, you were most grossly insolent to her?

She is a touchy woman. I may have said out something pretty straight when I found she wouldn't do the fair thing and raise my wages as I was married.

Re-examined.—What did you say to Lady Ireland?

I said that if she was as ready to pay her servants a living wage as she was to keep Mr. Dudley Burchall supplied with cash, there might be less talk about it. My wages were four pounds a week, with two rooms and light and fire, washing and two sets of clothes.

Janet Dude, 26.—My maiden name was Hardiman. I was employed at Shenstone Castle as parlour-maid for nine months ending October 31st last. I married James Dude in that month. We were married without obtaining permission from Lady Ireland. When my

husband was given notice, I gave notice to Lady Ireland.

Will you tell us on what terms Mr. Dudley Burchall was with Lady Ireland during the nine months for which you were employed at Shenstone Castle?

He was on terms of great intimacy with her. He was always with her; in the house and out of it. When she went out anywhere he went with her. He was far more with her than Sir William was. I have seen them pawing and horse-playing with one another frequently. Mr. Burchall used to run in and out of her room when Sir William was not about, and she went in and out of his room as if he was her husband. They did not seem to care who knew what was going on, so long as Sir William didn't hear of it.

Did you see Mr. Burchall kiss Lady Ireland?

Well, no. I remember the night of October 27th. I sat up late, because I expected Mr. Dude to come up to say good-night to me. When he didn't come, I went down the garden a bit, and passing by I saw two cigarette-ends lighted in one of the greenhouses. I went on a bit, not pretending that I had noticed anything, and Sir William popped out from behind another glasshouse and grabbed me by the arm. He asked me what the — I was doing there, and why I wasn't in bed. He told me to go back to the house. Then he changed his mind suddenly. He put his hand in his pocket and took out some money and gave it to me. "You're a sharp girl," he said. "I expect you've seen some nice things going on, eh, behind my back." I said that I wasn't going to be bought to give information about my mistress. "All right, all right," he said. "I know all about it. But you'll stay here now with me. I want you to be able to speak to what you see." Of course I knew he was on to the mistress and Mr. Dudley. I didn't want to be mixed up in it and have

to go into the court and be a witness. That wouldn't do me any good at all. I screwed out of his hand, and ran back to the house by another way. I have no doubt that the people smoking in the other glasshouse were Lady Ireland and Mr. Dudley Burchall. All the servants knew that they often went out there late at night and sat there talking for perhaps a couple of hours.

Have you ever seen anything criminal take place between Lady Ireland and Mr. Burchall?

No. No more than what I have said. But I have my own opinion, the same as we all had. Mr. Burchall was far more of a husband to her than Sir William.

In general—apart from that night, October 27th, what were the relations between Sir William and Lady Ireland?

Oh, she kidded him all right. She was clever enough to kid an old chap like him. The poor old thing would have licked her boots when I went there first.

Captain Ingoldsby was at Shenstone Castle a good deal?

Yes. He was just a nice baby-boy, though. Certainly he was sweet on her, and was always bringing her things, poor little chap, though he couldn't afford it. But he was quite a harmless babe. Besides, he was afraid of his life of Mr. Dudley.

Why?

Mr. Dudley caught him trying to kiss Lady Ireland's neck at the back one day, just after the tennis began last year. He played a syphon of soda all over him. I saw him do it. I was bringing out the tea-things on to the tennis-courts.

Was that done as a joke?

It was a joke that was more than half serious.

But in general how did Mr. Burchall and Captain Ingoldsby get on?

Oh, all right. Mr. Burchall treated him as nothing

that mattered, and Captain Ingoldsby knew that if he didn't keep in with Mr. Burchall, he wouldn't have a chance to come to the house. Mr. Burchall had Mr. Theobald under his thumb, and it was Mr. Theobald that was supposed to arrange the shooting-parties. But it was Mr. Burchall really asked whoever he liked. Sir William knew no one—the County people wouldn't touch him, except ask him to dinner once a year. He was no sport, and he was always bragging about the money he had made in business. Family people wouldn't stand for that, you see.

Thank you. This illumination upon the expansions and reserves of County society is extremely valuable.

Paul Herbert Cruden, 59.—Examined by Counsel for Lady Ireland.—I have been employed as butler at Shenstone Castle for twelve years. I cannot say that I have at any time noticed anything wrong in the behaviour of Lady Ireland towards Mr. Dudley Burchall. She is a very independent lady and always does the first thing that comes into her head. I have seen her and Mr. Burchall go in and out of one another's rooms often, and skylarking together, but I never thought there was anything wrong in it. Mr. Burchall is a very jolly, sporting sort of gentleman. He is a great hand with the ladies. I am aware that, before Sir William's death, they were in the habit of going at night to sit in one of the glasshouses. That was in the autumn and coming on to the winter. Lady Ireland called that house "My Rosary" by way of joke, because it was filled with special roses she thought a lot of—some little trees of roses that came from Persia, I think, and were very rare. They used to go and sit there at any hour of the day or evening. I never of my own knowledge saw them go there late at night, but I heard talk of it.

Cross-examined.—It would be perfectly absurd, in your opinion, to suggest that there was anything more serious in Lady Ireland's conduct towards Mr. Burchall than mere high spirits ?

Nothing more than that, in my opinion.

You have had ample opportunities of judging the character of the maid, Janet Dude ?

Yes.

Have you found her strictly truthful ?

She is that kind of woman that can tell the truth so that it is a lie. She was always a dangerous, spiteful girl, and most impertinent to her superiors.

Claire Marie Desprez, 29.—I have been employed as maid to Lady Ireland for the past three years. I have never witnessed anything in her conduct with any gentleman which could be considered in any way wrong. I think Lady Ireland is at moments careless of appearances, that is all. I have frequently seen her go in and out of Mr. Burchall's rooms. When he broke his collar-bone, hunting, she was always looking after him, for instance. That was two years ago. I knew that they used to sit out in the glasshouse where Lady Ireland had her special roses. It was fitted up as a sort of lounge. There were blinds that could be let down. I never saw them drawn down. I heard talk that Lady Ireland went out there at night. If so, it must have been after I had gone off duty, about eleven o'clock most nights.

In your opinion, and speaking from your experience, is the maid, Janet Dude, a truthful person ?

Oh, far from it, indeed. I myself have never believed a word that she has said. I have always detested that woman as a liar.

Dudley Burchall (recalled).—Upon the death of Sir William, the allowance of £400 a year which he made

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me ceased, but under his will I receive £1000 a year charged upon the estate, so long as I continue to reside upon the estate and to take an active interest in its management.

That will was made three years ago ?

Yes. So I believe.

Are you aware that on the 28th of October last Sir William paid a visit to his solicitors in Westpool and gave them instructions for the preparation of a new will ?

Yes. My solicitors have told me so.

Have you been informed of the purport of the instructions given by Sir William ?

Yes—in a general way. I have not seen the detailed instructions. I am aware that under the new will, if it had been actually made, I should not have received a penny of Sir William's money, and that I should have been obliged to leave Shenstone Castle and live elsewhere. I am aware also that Lady Ireland would have received only an annuity of £500 a year while she remained unmarried. If she remarried she was to lose that. I knew that these instructions were sent over from the Foundry to Sir William's solicitors after my interview with him at his office that afternoon, and that before he left Westpool that evening he went and saw his solicitors.

You expected something of the sort to happen—when you left Sir William's office that afternoon ?

I thought it quite likely.

Where do you now reside ?

At Shenstone Castle.

In the house ?

No. I am occupying the house previously used by Mr. Theobald. Mr. Theobald has transferred to quarters at the Estate Office Building in the village.

Mr. Theobald still holds the position of agent ?

Yes. He has now assistance in the work. He has been in extremely poor health for the past three months. I had to do most of his work until an assistant was appointed—Mr. Ronald Stairs. I still take an active part in the management of the estate.

Henry William Maudesley, F.R.C.S., The Firs, Shenstone.—On the evening of October 28th last, I was summoned by telephone to the railway station at Shenstone. I saw Sir William there in a first-class compartment, in a siding. He was dead. I formed the conclusion that he had died not much more than half an hour before I examined him, which was at ten minutes to eight. According to my calculation, the hour of his death would have been about 7.15 or 7.20. I found three wounds, all apparently inflicted by the same weapon—a smallish, pointed weapon, with a very sharp cutting edge. (*Shown Exhibit 3.*) All three wounds might have been inflicted by this pocket-knife. On the left side of the sternum I found an incised, vertical wound, an inch long, over the cartilage of the third rib. There was abrasion of this and of the fourth cartilage. I also found two stab-wounds in the neck to the right of the thyroid cartilage, one above the other. The external carotid artery and common carotid artery, as well as the internal jugular vein, had been severed, also the vagus nerve. The lower wound involved the cricoid cartilage and the first and second rings of the trachea, which were divided; also a punctured wound of the mucous membrane on the posterior wall of the trachea. Death occurred before anæsthesia was completed.

The wound above the heart would have caused death almost instantaneously. At the time, I formed the impression that it had done so. The light in the railway carriage was indifferent, and I had no other light avail-

able. Later that evening, when the body had been removed to the mortuary chapel, I made a further examination. I then formed the conclusion that Sir William had been strangled by the pressure of two very powerful hands, and that in all probability he had been very nearly insensible when the knife-wounds were inflicted. On the following morning I held a consultation with Sir Alexander Grierson, who, independently, had formed the same opinion. We both certified the cause of death as I have stated. We did not perform an autopsy, as there seemed no necessity to do so.

I saw, upon both sides of the neck and throat, depressions clearly inflicted by the pressure of the fingers of two hands. The face was congested and violently distorted. The pupils of the eyes were dilated.

I observed, with regard to the smallest of the knife-wounds, that it had been inflicted with much less violence than the other two. In withdrawing the weapon, it had turned to the front, and the cutting-edge had inflicted a shallow abrasion. I am of opinion that when this third blow was delivered the blade of the knife closed partially, or very nearly altogether.

It is not possible to say definitely in this or any other similar case whether the clothes of the person who inflicted these injuries would have been stained by the gush of blood. Possibly the gush of blood was, initially, very small in the particular case. I am inclined to believe so. This happens in some similar cases—in others, the gush of blood is very violent.

Sir Alexander Grierson, M.D., M.Ch., F.R.C.S., corroborated the preceding witness's statement as regarded the details of the injuries inflicted.

Netta Gladys Copeland, 21.—I am the daughter of Thomas Copeland, of 31 Lime Walk, Waterley. My

father was employed at Messrs. Ireland's Brick and Tile Works in Waterley for over twenty years, as general manager. In 1899 there was a strike in the trade, and during the strike an explosive of some sort was thrown into Sir William's—he was only Mr. Ireland then—into his office, while he was sitting at his table talking to my father. It didn't explode at once, and there was time for my father to pick it up and throw it out of a window into the yard, where it did a lot of damage. After that, Sir William was always very friendly with my father. He used often to call at our house on Sundays after church in those days. That was before he bought Shenstone Castle. Sometimes he would share our dinner. He did that on and off for a great many years, after I was born. Sometimes he'd drop in in the evening, if he happened to be passing through Waterley. He was my godfather and always made a great fuss of me, giving me presents and things. He always called me Baby. When I left school, he gave me an appointment as secretary to the general manager at the Works in Waterley—this was after my father had retired. I used to be present at his conversations with the manager, and he often talked to me about private matters, both about the business and about himself. He used to say that he wished I was his daughter.

On October 28th I was up in Westpool interviewing some contractors. After lunch I called at the Foundry to let Sir William know that I had got the contract all right. I saw him alone. He was very worried and depressed, and told me that he was the most unfortunate and unhappy old fool in the world. I asked him why—because he had been so lucky in every way, both in his business and in his private life. He told me then that he suspected that Lady Ireland had been fond of Mr. Dudley Burchall for a long time past, and that it was

natural enough, because they were thrown so much together, and Mr. Burchall was so attractive to women. I said to Sir William that he was only imagining things, and that I was quite sure that Lady Ireland was above anything that wasn't absolutely straight and honourable.

You have known Lady Ireland with some degree of intimacy?

Yes. Lady Ireland has been very kind to me. I have gone down frequently to Shenstone.

You had met Mr. Burchall down there often?

Yes.

So that we may take it that you knew both Lady Ireland and Mr. Burchall quite well, ever since her marriage, at all events?

Yes. I got to know Mr. Burchall only after he came back at the end of the war.

What was your impression as to the relations between them?

It never occurred to me for a moment that they were anything but the best of friends. I said so to Sir William. I felt quite sure that he was just a bit liverish, or worried, and was imagining things. But he wouldn't cheer up at all. He dictated a memorandum to me for his solicitors, giving them directions for drawing a new will for him. It was sent round to the solicitors by hand afterwards. The solicitors were to have brought down the draft of the new will to Shenstone next day. I typed the memorandum out myself on Mr. Carmichael's machine. I didn't like doing it—I was amazed when I heard the instructions to the solicitors—but of course I had to do what I was told. As I was going away, Sir William said that the best thing he could do would be to finish himself and get out of the way—that he wasn't wanted. I pretended to laugh at that, and told him he ought to have a course of violet rays or something. But I left him feeling

that he was in a very bad frame of mind. I had often told him that he ought to see a doctor, as I was sure it was indigestion that made him feel always so weak and bad.

He was not a strong man physically ?

No. Often he couldn't lift his hands to brush his hair without groaning. He suffered terribly from neuritis, and his muscles had all gone wrong. If you jostled against him, ever so lightly, he'd fall if there wasn't something for him to catch hold of. And he was a big man, too.

So that he could have made very little resistance to anyone attacking him ?

I am afraid so. I'm sure he couldn't have put up any fight. I've seen him exhausted by just putting on his overcoat.

Cicely Dorcas Ireland, 27.—My husband was the late Sir William Ireland of Shenstone Castle. I was married to him in 1921. We had no children. My maiden name was Blundell.

Your married life was quite happy ?

Absolutely. Sir William was the soul of kindness and generosity. I can't recall that there was ever any difference of opinion between us upon any point that really mattered, except with regard to hunting. He did not hunt himself, and was very nervous about my doing so. It would be absurd to suggest that I found him at any time jealous or suspicious. His health was never good. He suffered from neuritis badly, and his temper varied like everyone else's. But I can say that to me, personally, he never spoke an angry word until the afternoon of October 28th. On that afternoon I went up to Westpool from Shenstone by the 1.30.

Alone ?

Yes. I did not go up by car that day, as I usually

do, because it was a most disagreeable day, and I disliked the prospect of driving back in a fog along narrow roads. I had one or two things to do in Westpool. I reached the Foundry at about four o'clock.

Had you arranged to meet Mr. Burchall there ?

Yes. We wished to have a talk with my husband about Mr. Theobald.

You had heard that Sir William intended to dismiss Mr. Theobald from the position of agent ?

Yes. Sir William had mentioned it to Mr. Burchall that morning before leaving Shenstone Castle.

Had you heard any suggestion of his dismissal—I mean on this particular occasion—until that morning ?

No. It had come as a complete surprise to Mr. Burchall and to me.

Did you meet Mr. Theobald in the yard of the Foundry ?

Yes. He told me that he had just had an interview with my husband, and that it was all up, and that he was going to be dismissed. He was, naturally, very much agitated and upset. He said that he was going to be thrown upon the world at his age, with no chance whatever of getting anything to live on. I was very greatly concerned about him, and I assured him that both I and Mr. Burchall would do everything in our power to induce my husband to reconsider his decision.

That is to say, you and Mr. Burchall were arrayed on Mr. Theobald's side against your husband and your husband's decision to dismiss an unsatisfactory agent employee ?

Counsel for Lady Ireland.—I object. There is no suggestion of a league between Lady Ireland and Mr. Burchall to interfere with Sir William's conduct of his own business affairs.

Witness.—I am quite willing to answer the question. To say "against" my husband is ridiculous. On the

contrary, Mr. Burchall and I both considered that it was altogether in Sir William's interest that Mr. Theobald should be retained.

You have known Mr. Theobald for a long time ?

Ever since I was a baby. He is a distant cousin of mine, I believe. At any rate, his folk and mine have been neighbours for ages and ages. I've always thought he was an ideal person for the job of agent. There is nothing he doesn't know about estate work. He's the best vet in the West of England. He's a clinking fine sportsman. And one of the best hands at managing workpeople I've ever known. The people on the estate would do anything for him. And they are not easy people to manage. I was very greatly put out over the affair. I went on into my husband's office.

Just a moment, please. Did you then arrange with Mr. Theobald to see him later that afternoon ?

Arrange ? No. Not precisely. He knew, of course, that I should go back to Shenstone with Sir William by the 6.22 train. I may have said to Mr. Theobald that, if he was going back by that train also, I should look out for him on the platform at Cross Street and let him know how things had gone.

On the preceding day had your husband spoken to you of a knife ?

Yes. He told me to ask one of our chauffeurs, Henry Hopgood, for a penknife with which he had presented him in place of one which he had borrowed from Hopgood and lost. I was to get the knife from Hopgood and bring it up to Westpool next day—that is, Wednesday 28th—and get an inscription put on the plate—Hopgood's name and address. My husband said that he ought to get this done for Hopgood. He smiled and added : " In case I should borrow it from him." I brought the knife up to Westpool with me next day. I got it from Hopgood in a hurry just

before I left Shenstone Castle. I wrapped it up in the first piece of paper that came to hand and fastened a bit of string about it loosely. The paper and string were off a small parcel from Morny's which I had received that morning and had just opened.

(*Shown Exhibit 3.*) Is this the knife which you received from Hopgood ?

Yes.

(*Shown Exhibit 15.*) Is this the string with which you fastened up the brown paper around the knife ?

Yes. You can always tell Morny's string.

You had the knife still in your possession when you met Mr. Theobald at the Foundry ?

Yes. I had not had time to leave it to be engraved.

Did you give it to Mr. Theobald then ?

No. I gave it to him afterwards when I saw him at Cross Street Terminus.

We will come to that presently. Did Mr. Theobald return to Sir William's office with you ?

No.

When you went to the office, had Mr. Burchall arrived there ?

No. He arrived a few minutes later. I had no conversation with my husband before Mr. Burchall came as there were some people with him, and he continued talking to them after he had introduced me. One of them was the new member for North Westshire, Mr. Raike-Davies. I chatted to him until Mr. Burchall arrived. Mr. Raike-Davies and the two men who were with him went away shortly after that. My husband was not at all well that day. He was always worse on raw, cold days. I felt sorry that we had come that afternoon to talk to him about Mr. Theobald. However, as a matter of fact, there was really no discussion of the matter worth talking about. Mr. Burchall and I said what we could to dissuade him from dis-

missing Mr. Theobald, but his mind was, I think, quite made up—for the moment. He wouldn't listen to any argument.

Did he mention whether he had any particular person in view as successor to Mr. Theobald?

Yes. But he refused to say who it was.

Had you any idea who it was?

None whatever.

Have you since learned who it was?

No.

Some other matters were discussed at that interview, were they not?

Must we go into that?

Yes. I'm afraid so.

Oh, there is nothing to be afraid of.

I must ask you to tell us exactly what they were?

There was some discussion about some money I had lent Mr. Burchall.

Will you give us, please, accurately, the several amounts which you had lent Mr. Burchall from the date of your marriage in 1921 to Sir William, up to October 28th 1925?

I have jotted them down on this slip, from my cheque-book stubs. I believe they are all here.

(Witness initialed Exhibit 22.)

I find that these payments—they were loans?

Yes. Loans.

I find that these payments began about six months after your marriage. In 1921 there were four payments to Mr. Burchall, amounting to £271. In 1922 the total is £633. In 1923 the total is £439. In 1924 the total is £530. In 1925, up to October 28th, the total is £957. In these four years, therefore, you lent Mr. Burchall £2830?

If that is what the slip shows, it is correct.

Have any of these loans been repaid?

Yes. Mr. Burchall has done an enormous amount of work in connection with the estate.

The estate was Sir William Ireland's. Any payments made for work done in connection with it should have been made by him ?

I did not look at it that way.

Were these payments made out of your own private income or out of the allowance which your husband made you ?

I did not distinguish. I regarded them as made out of my husband's money, I think.

What was your private income for the years 1921-1925, apart from allowances made to you by Sir William ?

I had about £1200 a year of my own.

How much did Sir William allow you a year ?

He gave me anything I asked for, but there was a fixed allowance of £1000 a year for my own personal expenses.

You regarded these loans, however, as business payments made for services rendered to the estate ?

Yes.

Yet you paid these sums out of an allowance made to you for your own personal purposes ?

I regarded any money given me by my husband as still his.

Did you inform your husband that you were making these advances to Mr. Burchall ?

Yes.

When ?

At the end of last October.

Did you inform him of your own accord, or because he asked you whether you had been lending Mr. Burchall money ?

He asked me.

You did not, therefore, say anything to Sir William

of these loans, which you had been making for four years—as a reward for services rendered to his estate—until the end of October last, when he asked you to do so ?

No. It did not seem necessary.

What was the precise date upon which you gave this information to your husband ?

I believe it was on October 26th.

Two days before his death ?

Yes.

Did he approve of what you had done ?

Not altogether.

Did he actually disapprove ?

Well, yes. I suppose one would put it that way. He asked me to stop doing it. He was put out because Mr. Burchall had been losing a lot of money, racing and speculating. When we discussed this at his office on the afternoon of October 28th, he threatened to stop Mr. Burchall's allowance if he found that I was advancing any more money to him. I said I thought that was rather ridiculous, especially as Mr. Burchall worked so hard on the estate, and was his stepson.

You knew Mr. Burchall before your marriage ?

Oh yes, quite well.

You'd been on terms of intimate friendship with him before your marriage ?

I knew him quite well before my marriage.

And afterwards the intimacy continued ?

We continued to be intimate friends. Naturally, more intimate, because he was my husband's stepson, and living in the same house.

Had there been at any time before your marriage any feeling stronger than an intimate friendship ?

No.

Or after ?

No. Naturally, I saw a great deal of Mr. Burchall, as

he spent so much of his time at Shenstone Castle. I don't know that the phrase, "a brotherly and sisterly affection," would express it exactly. Brothers and sisters don't hit it off very often.

Have you ever kissed Mr. Burchall, or been kissed by him?

Never in my life.

Have there ever been any familiarities—by that I mean, any familiarities which any fair-minded person would regard as amounting to disloyalty to your husband—between you?

Never. We have always ragged a bit. Fair-minded persons are perhaps not very numerous. I suppose there are lots of people who have been quite anxious to make mischief.

You have been in the habit of going in and out of his rooms?

Why not?

You must not ask me questions, please. Answer the question.

Yes. Of course I have.

And he has gone in and out of your bedroom?

Yes.

When you were alone there?

Sometimes.

You were in the habit of sitting with him out in the garden, in one of the glasshouses—late at night?

Yes.

Did your husband go to sit with you there?

Often.

Did he ever raise any objection to your sitting there with Mr. Burchall alone—late at night?

Never.

Did you sit with Mr. Burchall there alone after the rest of the household had retired?

Yes. Occasionally.

And you assure us that between you, a most attractive young woman, and this young man, who has a reputation for being most attractive to women, no familiarity ever took place ?

Never.

On the night of October 27th did you sit out in this glasshouse with Mr. Burchall all alone ?

Yes. From about a quarter to twelve until about half-past one. We had been out to dinner and I was tired. I believe we both fell asleep. My husband did not come to the greenhouse that night. I believed that he had gone to bed. He made no reference next morning to having been in the garden.

Did he make any reference to the night before when you saw him at his office on the afternoon of October 28th—next day ?

Yes.

An angry reference ?

He was not quite himself that afternoon.

What did he say ?

That he knew we had been out in the glasshouse the night before.

Did he make any serious charge then against you and Mr. Burchall ?

No. He was not himself, and he appeared to have worked himself into a little fit of jealousy. That was all.

Did you hear him say to Mr. Burchall, "I would rather see you in hell than give you another penny of my money" ?

Yes. Something like that. In the end, we all said too much, and all talked together like angry children. Mr. Burchall and I thought it better to go away. So we went away.

You left the Foundry in Mr. Burchall's company ?

Yes. We went and had some tea when I had finished my shopping. Mr. Burchall left me at the restaurant

with some friends I met there. That was about a quarter to six. I remained with them until six. I then walked down to Cross Street Terminus where I met my husband on the platform. He said, when I met him: "I made a frightful fool of myself this afternoon, dear. I haven't felt very well all day." I patted his hand, and he seemed cheered up that I was not going to take things seriously.

The London train was pretty full, but there was no one in the slip-carriage, I think, except Mr. Theobald. I did not see Mr. Theobald get into the carriage. He got in after my husband and I did.

Had you given him a packet—a brown paper packet—tied about with string?

Yes. The little parcel containing Hopgood's knife. I had not had time to see about getting the engraving done. I gave it to Mr. Theobald when I spoke to him on the platform, and asked him to give it back to Hopgood, and say I should get it done another day. I gave it to him on the platform, I am sure of that.

The brown paper and the string were then on it?

Yes.

No one else entered the slip-carriage before the train started?

No. I believe not.

Michael Shafter, porter, Cross Street Terminus, Westpool.—There were only three passengers in the slip-carriage when the 6.22 left Cross Street Station on the evening of October 28th—a lady and a gentleman in the first-class compartment, and a gentleman in the compartment behind them. I recognise this gentleman (Mr. Theobald) as the gentleman in the last compartment.

Lady Ireland (recalled).—After the train had left Westpool, did you have any conversation with your husband?

No. We both read our newspapers until we reached Waterley Junction. Neither Mr. Theobald's name nor Mr. Burchall's was mentioned. The carriage was bitterly cold. My husband complained greatly of the cold.

Did he appear to you in any way unusually ill or weak ?

No. I did not notice anything except he complained so much of the cold.

He spoke then ?

No. He didn't speak, exactly, but he made the sounds one makes when one is cold.

How long after leaving Westpool did he last make such a sound ?

I could not say definitely. Perhaps half an hour. The carriage got warmer gradually.

When did he move last ?

I think when he got up to pull down the blinds—not long after leaving Westpool.

Did he prefer to have the blinds pulled down when travelling by railway at night ?

No. I asked him to pull down the blinds.

Why ?

Because I hate a fog against the windows of a railway carriage. It always seems to me like something trying to get in at you.

Your husband went to sleep, while he was reading his paper ?

Yes.

When ?

I can't say exactly. A considerable time before we reached Waterley, I should say.

He did not wake up when the carriage stopped at Waterley in the siding ?

No.

A moment or two after the carriage stopped, did

S.-C.M.

K

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Captain Ingoldsby open the door of your compartment ?

Yes.

That was immediately after the carriage had stopped ?

Yes. Immediately.

Did he enter your compartment ?

No. He saw that my husband was asleep, and shut the door again.

Your husband did not wake up ?

No.

Did you remain then in your own compartment ?

No. After a few moments I remembered that I wanted to talk to Captain Ingoldsby about something. I got up and left our compartment and went along to the first compartment, where Captain Ingoldsby was. I remained there, talking to him for some time—I think until we must have been about half-way to Shenstone.

Was your husband still asleep when you left your own compartment ?

Yes. I believe he was still dozing. He did not speak when I got up to leave the carriage, nor open his eyes. I said : " I want to speak to Captain Ingoldsby for a moment." He did not open his eyes. His newspaper was then on his knees. I left the door of our compartment open a little behind me, to ventilate it. I can't say whether the door of Mr. Theobald's compartment was then opened. I don't remember that either of the two doors by which one entered the carriage from the outside was open. There was no one in the second compartment ; I am absolutely sure of that. (*Here Witness was greatly affected.*) I shall never forgive myself for leaving my husband. If I had stayed——

At what time, according to your estimate, did you leave Captain Ingoldsby and return to your own compartment ?

I have tried to remember, but I cannot say about

times accurately. If the train left Waterley at 7.17, it takes about a quarter of an hour to get to Shenstone. I think it must have been about twenty-four or twenty-five minutes past seven that I left Captain Ingoldsby's compartment.

During the time you had been with him, had you heard anything to attract your attention to any of the other compartments of the carriage ?

No. Nothing.

No sound at all ?

Nothing whatever.

Was the door of Captain Ingoldsby's compartment open ?

No. The window was open. Captain Ingoldsby was afraid of my being in a draught. He shut the door leading into the corridor.

When you went back to your own compartment what occurred ?

Witness (almost inaudibly).—I—I actually spoke to my husband. I said : " Captain Ingoldsby is up in front in a third-class compartment. Shall we ask him to come in here ? " He made no reply. Then I saw, on my seat, the piece of brown paper with the string still about it, in which Hopgood's penknife had been wrapped. I was astonished to see it there. I picked up the packet, and found that the knife was not in it. I knew the paper and string had been still on the knife when I had given it to Mr. Theobald. I could not understand it. The brown paper had been slightly opened at one end to take the knife out, but had not been otherwise disturbed. I wondered how on earth it had got there. I thought Mr. Theobald must have been in the carriage while I was away. I asked my husband if he had. He made no reply, and then I saw blood on his collar. I looked at the place where he had bled, and then, by the look of his face, I knew he was dead.

I can't remember how long I stayed looking at him. I didn't know what I was doing. I got out of the compartment somehow, and I think I must have fainted then. When I came to, I was in Captain Ingoldsby's compartment. He would not let me go back to my husband. He went to him, but when he came back he told me that my husband was dead. I don't remember anything clearly after that, until the stationmaster at Shenstone, Mr. Pedley, came into the waiting-room while I was there with Captain Ingoldsby, and began to ask me questions as if— (*Here Witness was overcome.*)

Have you any idea whatever as to how your husband met these injuries which caused his death ?

No.

I want you to answer this question as accurately as possible. How long after the slip-carriage stopped in the siding did Captain Ingoldsby open the door of your compartment ?

Immediately. It seemed to me that the carriage had scarcely stopped moving.

Did he appear surprised to find you and Sir William in the first-class compartment ?

No.

He was an intimate friend of yours ? Do you know of any reason why he did not sit down in your compartment ?

Captain Ingoldsby had always been a little afraid of my husband, I think, because my husband had rather a short way with young men.

When you realised that your husband was dead, did you call out ?

I don't know. I think so.

Did you call to Mr. Theobald ?

No.

He was nearer to you than Captain Ingoldsby ?

I didn't call to anyone. I simply rushed out of the

compartment, and Captain Ingoldsby caught me just as I fainted. I believe he had heard me cry out.

Did you touch your husband after you had realised that he was dead ?

I touched his hand, that is all.

When you left your husband's office at the Foundry that afternoon, were you aware that your husband intended to alter his will ?

No. If I had known it, it would have been a matter of complete indifference to me.

Was anything said during the conversation with your husband which would have informed Mr. Burchall that your husband intended to exclude him from his will ?

No. Not really. As far as I can recall, there was no allusion to wills whatever.

You have several times interfered to save Mr. Theobald from dismissal ?

I have always done my best to smooth out any little difficulties there may have been.

But it is the fact that, but for your intervention, Mr. Theobald would have been dismissed long before Sir William's death ?

That is an exaggeration. But I should be very happy to believe that it was the truth.

You had gone up from Shenstone to Westpool that morning with a first-class return ticket ?

Yes. I have not a season ticket, as I usually go up by car.

You gave up the "up" half of your ticket at Westpool ?

Yes.

Where did you keep the return portion during the day ?

In my bag.

Captain Ingoldsby took it from your bag at Shenstone and gave it up to the porter, Gannett ?

Yes. I know of no means by which it could possibly have become stained with blood while it was in my possession.

When you saw the little brown paper parcel lying on the seat of the carriage, the string was still loosely wrapped about the paper ?

Yes.

You picked up the packet and felt it ?

Yes.

Did you remove the string ?

No. I don't think so. I'm sure I didn't.

Was it still in your hand when you spoke to your husband ?

Yes. I suppose so.

When he did not reply you looked at him more intently. You saw blood on his overcoat. What did you do then ?

I bent down and looked closer. And then I saw by his face that he was dead. I knew at once he was dead.

You still had the brown paper parcel in your hand ?

Yes. I suppose so.

Did it touch Sir William's overcoat ?

I don't think so.

You then rushed out of the compartment. Was the brown paper parcel still in your hand ?

I don't know. I can't possibly say. Perhaps so. I should have said that I would have let anything held in my hand fall. I can't say.

Can you tell us what became of the brown paper ?

No. I never saw it again.

Can you explain how it was that this string, which you say was the string wrapped about the brown paper, was found in the carriage, while the brown paper was not found ?

No. I can't explain in the least.

You can't say if it was still in your hand when you rushed out of the compartment ?

No. I cannot say.

Had marriage relations ceased between you and your husband for some time previous to his death ?

Counsel for Lady Ireland.—You need not answer that question.

Examining Counsel.—I will not press the point. I have no other questions to ask this witness.

Cross-examined.—When the slip-carriage came to a stop in the siding—at the moment when it touched the buffers and came to a stop—was your husband, to your knowledge, alive or dead ?

He was alive.

You are certain that he was alive ?

Yes. I am certain.

He was asleep ?

Yes. I'm sure he was asleep.

How long before the carriage stopped moving had you heard him speak ?

He did not speak, I think, at all during the journey from Westpool to Waterley. He read his newspaper and then dozed off.

Did he move at all at any time after leaving Westpool ?

No. Not after he had got up to draw down the blinds. His paper dropped on to his knees by degrees, as it always did when he went to sleep reading. After that, I think—I am almost sure—he remained quite quiet.

Quite quiet ? You did not detect anything—any slightest movement ?

I cannot remember. I was reading. I did not watch him attentively.

So that, actually, you cannot say for certain whether

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he was alive or dead when the carriage stopped at Waterley ?

I am sure he was alive.

You believed that he was alive ?

Yes.

But you do not know for an absolute certainty ?

No.

PART III
INTERLUDE

INTERLUDE

I

GORE shut the crimson covers upon the tragedy. Their stiff newness expressed more than mere official indifference to the curious, tangled story which they contained between them. Their stiffness and newness contrasted sharply with the pliable, softened, handled feel and look of the sheets of typescript which they held together. Although those sheets were copies only of the original examinations, yet it was clear that they had been long fumbled by absorbed fingers—so long that a new binding had become necessary.

Evidently these witnesses had been examined (presumably a police examination, conducted by trained counsel in this instance—a most unusual procedure) at different periods, not immediately following the murder, but three or four months later, during the following January and February. Since that time nine months had elapsed. There had plainly been much anxious official browsing upon those dog-eared pages.

A number of marginal notes, in different handwritings, had been, not altogether successfully, deleted. These were chiefly the helpless queries of the superior official, apparently. They were not helpful.

Quite a curious business.

The offices were very quiet; the staff had long departed. Gore wheeled round his chair so that he faced the fire and, reaching a hand to a switch, shut out all other light from his pipe and his impressions.

Not yet had he the slightest inclination to lay a finger upon a single piece of the puzzle that lay scattered higgledy-piggledy upon the table of his thoughts. Only too sharply had experience taught him the disastrous results that could issue from the too hurried application of logic and common sense to any human action. Presently the cautious task of petting and patting the pieces into the first vague, wavering lines of a pattern would begin—a hard, tedious, matter-of-fact, four-square job. But not yet.

For the present the ugly business must be left to itself, lying there higgledy-piggledy, cut up into little curt, dangerous blocks of question and answer, all raw-edged in spite of the sharpness of the legal tools that had shaped them. After a little while of staring and hesitation, out of nothing . . . from nowhere . . . would come faithfully one of those two architects who build the houses of our thoughts for us—the one who builds in a twinkling with one brick a thousand palaces and hovels for our view . . . as-they-may-be. An interesting fellow to watch at work by the firelight; one of his vagaries will probably be what we want, exactly. And one knows that he is a far cleverer, quicker workman than that other who will come after him and who will make, with slow, painful fingers, with exactly the number of bricks we give him, the house-that-must-be. A rather boring fellow—prone to curious anticlimaxes and disappointments. One prefers to remain houseless for a while.

The fire faded. Solemnly Gore puffed his pipe until, between its black bowl and the dying coals grew a haze of grey fog, thickening and thinning. There, half seen, wholly seen, in the pallid, bitter darkness of that October evening, stood the slip-carriage, with its windows, blinded and unblinded . . . its angles picked out here and there faintly by the wan, yellow gleam from one dingy gas-lamp above it.

His fancy had elected to see it from the East Signal Cabin, as the signalman, Amos Sinnott, had seen it on that October evening, while it stood there motionless, before the North Pier train moved out to it from No. 3 platform. All round it for some distance lay foggy darkness, always thickening a little or lightening a little, baffling, uncertain—muffling sounds too. Above the carriage, at its further end, the pale corona of the lamp blinked feebly, smothered. No doubt its fickle beams caught the wet roof of the carriage, too, and reflected a dim illumination from it. Below that, the windows stood out, rectangles of comparative strength and warmth and comfort—two bright rectangles, then one black and blinded—then, at the near end, a third bright one. A blood-red tail-light signed the picture with a touch of suspended life.

Near by, ghostly, on other lines of the siding, lay a few deserted, parked carriages and trucks. Beyond, over the roof of the slip-carriage, was the dishevelled blackness of the goods yard, strewn with files of wagons, with a glare of light hanging from the fog at the east end, the end where the entrance to the yard lay. Voices were shouting over there; there was the clatter of shovels, slivers of rag-time, the slither of coal tipped into lorries, the feverish fret of donkey-engines, laughter. Beyond that again, blackness impenetrable where the embankment fell down at its south side to the waste ground between the railway and the twisting river. Down there lay Tip and Run Lane, with its rubbish-dump against the embankment wall, and the little cottage where lived Lahn, the rag and bone man.

Back to the slip-coach again. Behind it—a long way behind it—was the light of the station itself, reflected, no doubt, in places, along the curves of the threads of glistening rail that crossed and intercrossed this side of the two main bays. Over there

one could see standing the 6.22 from Westpool, discharging and picking up its passengers, hissing and humming, impatient to be out again, hurtling down through the blackness to bed in Plymouth. So much, and probably not much more, could one see, leaning from the south-facing windows of the East Signal Cabin. Immediately beneath one passed the rails of the Westpool main line. Behind one, the northern arm of the cross-shaped embankment reached out with its curve of twinkling lamps, bearing the rails of the Hawley line. In that direction, too, the sky was ruddy with the glare of the town; its life lay up there, away from these sordid purlieus of railways and factories.

Gore knew Waterley—a backward, slow, out-of-date county capital, where the tying up of a penn'orth of tacks took five minutes. As dull and safe a place, as friendly and as law-abiding, as any on the face of the earth. Fancy shut it out, and went back to the dim, lonely siding. What had straight-faced Waterley to do with this crooked business? This was Tragedy, tied down to no place.

If one had had a night-glass focused upon those three little rectangles of light that evening, what would one have seen?

That, of course, was probably the whole puzzle. If one had been watching through a glass from the window of the East Signal Cabin, from 6.59 to 7.17 on that October evening, what would one have seen? Theobald . . . "screwed" . . . asleep in one little lighted box, his feet on a cushion, his newspaper on the floor? Then, a blank, where a rectangle was missing. Then another lighted-up little box, empty. Then another, in which stood a young man and a young woman, chatting . . . first-class passengers, both, chatting in the soiled atmosphere of a third smoker on a cross-country line. . . . Had that been all that one would have seen?

On platform No. 1 the worthy Waterley burghers made a brief confusion—husbands or wives returning from a day's business or shopping in Westpool or London, or seeing friends off for Baynham or Exeter—absorbed in their respectable cares and purposes, heedless of that carriage of tragedy out there by the solitary lamp. On platform 3 a little crowd, smaller than the melting hubbub across the way, waited for the North Pier train to come up from Plymouth. No doubt many of those waiting passengers must have looked impatiently in the direction of the lonely lamp. For the night had fallen in bitter cold—no night to cool one's heels along a draughty platform. But those who had looked had seen a lamp and nothing more. They had blown their noses and changed chilled hands upon the grips of their bags and stamped numbed feet and dreamed of no such possible thing as murder within a cry of them.

Somewhere over there, by the goods yard, Boobyear, the permanent-way man, was sitting, wondering if he felt well enough to smoke a cigarette, fumbling in his pockets with stiffened fingers for a match. Before him, amongst the lace-work of the rails silhouetted against the light of the platforms momentarily, a figure emerges from the fog, passes blackly, is swallowed up—a figure in a short overcoat, a soft hat and leggings.

Leggings. . . . There were three pairs of them in the puzzle. Odd detail.

Listen. Any sound from that motionless carriage? Spray the wavering darkness with the eye of the night-glass. Anything moving? Were those voices nearer at hand, over there among the wagons? Was that a woman's voice . . . or Daniel Boobyear's fancy?

A wailing whistle to southwards—two red eyes, with a plume of orange smoke above them, coming up through the murk. . . . The Plymouth train. Signals clattered

from red to green and green to red. At platform Number 1 the hissing and brumming swell, doors slam, the southward-bound train moves and begins to pick its way across the points, shrieking nervously. The two red eyes down there have halted. They blot out, as the departing snake of lights passes them. More whistling, and the incoming snake slides up to platform 3.

A little while, and then the three coaches are drawn out cautiously towards the lonely lamp, the engine-driver alean from his cab on a placid elbow, half black, half orange. A whistling porter, dangling a lantern, hurries alongside the engine. It is detached, moves into the siding, is coupled by the porter before it has stopped moving. He raises his eyes to the windows of the slip-carriage as it is drawn out and pushed back behind the three coaches. He sees a young man and a young woman—their heads and shoulders only—standing in the front compartment. Then he dives in to uncouple the engine. It slides away, manœuvres back to the front of the train that is now the 7.15 (two minutes late already) for North Pier. He waves his lantern. The scream of a whistle, the heavy thud of the pistons, mighty hissing. . . . The carriage of tragedy recedes slowly, passes between platforms 2 and 3, disappears with its blood-red tail-light—its secret still safe. . . .

Down there by the river, where the fog is thickest, behind the gate opposite the little cottage in Tip and Run Lane, was that Sunbeam two-seater still standing, deserted, with its two parcels of cartridges, its tyres embedded in the boggy grass? Or had it vanished? Or had only Marius Lahn's imagination conjured it up for the placation of the Waterley police?

And down in Welder Road was anyone still loitering by the pitch-black mouth of the tunnel? Was that

little old French woman, alone in her lodgerless lodging-house, still peering out from behind her curtains at a loitering figure ?

Yes. A curious business.

Something hurled itself at the door, tornado-wise. There was a quavering, cajoling growl. Gore rose to his feet and admitted a tempestuous Airedale. For some moments there was wild work, and then, in obedience to a silently-pointed finger, Shamil¹ stretched himself on the hearth-rug before the fire and resigned himself to the worst.

There would be no picnic that night for Shamil, no titbits snuggled into the big, gentle, questing mouth. The senior partner of Messrs. Gore & Tolley did not dine when there was a job of work to be tackled before bedtime.

Shamil sighed comprehensively, and left his master to it.

2

On the southern slopes of the loveliest hills in England, about six miles from Waterley, lay Chapel Silver Manor, the residence of Sir Jonathan Carvel-Pryde. And in the library of that splendid old house, shut in by locked doors, Gore sat about two o'clock two days later, facing a mild-looking, rotund gentleman with an enigmatic countenance, upon whose capacious lap reposed Sir Jonathan's best beloved lady-cocker, Silver Sulky. A third gentleman stood on the hearth-rug with his back to the fire and warmed himself persistently and thoroughly. This was Sir Jonathan himself. The

¹ See *The Kink* (Collins & Co. Ltd.).

gentleman who was making love to Silver Sulky was Mr. Cavendish, of the Home Office.

"Yes," Sir Jonathan was saying, "my interview with Lady Ireland was entirely satisfactory. Of course, I'm a particular pet of hers. It seems that Mr. Burchall, having made up his mind to move into The Warren, is anxious to do it and get done with it."

Mr. Cavendish raised his benevolently pouched eyes: "And get done with the Shenstone Castle estate, of course? We were given to understand *that* definitely."

"Yes, Mr. Theobald would carry on with Mr. Stairs' assistance, under Colonel Gore's general supervision. That is quite definitely understood. Provided, of course"—this with a smile upon Colonel Gore—"that upon mutual inspection, Lady Ireland and Colonel Gore feel that they will get along nicely and happily. As no doubt they will."

"You arranged an interview, Sir Jonathan, I presume?" Mr. Cavendish inquired.

"Yes. As you suggested, to-morrow morning. Lady Ireland is not hunting to-morrow. An aged aunt has descended upon her and must be made much of assiduously. But she will be able to spare Colonel Gore the hour from eleven to twelve. I trust that will be satisfactory?"

"Quite satisfactory, Sir Jonathan. Quite satisfactory, indeed. I needn't remind you again of the necessity for absolute discretion——"

Sir Jonathan showed two valuable rows of teeth playfully.

"I know nothing about your infernal official creeping and crawling, my dear Cavendish, except that you were asked by your boss to ask me to recommend Colonel Gore as a fit and proper person to act as managing director of an estate. I've done it. I hope he is. And now I've forgotten that I did it, and remembered that

it's five hours since breakfast. There's the gong. Come along. Come on, Sulky, my dear. Din-din, ole gal."

That the authorities had been extremely worried by the case, and that they had been keeping a discreetly vigilant eye upon everyone connected with it, had become very clear to Gore in the course of his interview with Mr. Cavendish's chiefs at the Home Office on the day before. The net upshot of that interview had been a request that he would offer himself forthwith as a candidate for the position of—in Sir Jonathan's phrase—managing director of the Shenstone Castle estate. Mr. Burchall, for reasons of his own, had decided to vacate that position, to give up the comfortable agent's house and to move into a small house with some few acres of land attached to it, off the estate, and situated a mile or so on the north-west side of the village of Shenstone. How information of this unexplained intention had so promptly reached the official ears, had not been disclosed. But the official hand had, at all events, acted with promptitude. It had at once reached for a telephone and rung up both Colonel Gore and Sir Jonathan Carvel-Pryde.

Sir Jonathan, it had appeared, was a very old friend of Lady Ireland's family. He was also, it was conveyed to Gore, a very old and intimate friend of a Very Important Person. He had been asked, and had undertaken, to recommend Colonel Gore earnestly to Lady Ireland for the vacant post. Also he had, very civilly, invited that gentleman and his deputy sponsor, Mr. Cavendish, down to Chapel Silver, pending the result of his negotiations.

Mr. Theobald, who had retained the position of agent, would continue in that post. Colonel Gore's responsibilities would be those which Mr. Burchall had resigned,

a general supervisorship of the estate and of the estate-office. The position would be, Gore thought, an agreeable one. But the Very Important Person had laid greater stress upon its opportunities and its uses than upon its amenities.

There had been some discussion as to the name under which Mr. Burchall's successor was to be introduced. Upon consideration, however, to avoid inconveniences (since it appeared quite improbable that, in that remoter part of the West Country, Colonel Gore would be connected with any atmosphere but that of the parade-ground, the covert and the butt), as Colonel Gore he would present himself to the mistress of Shenstone Castle and its wide acres.

On the following morning, therefore, in a sad, drizzling rain, a big Rolls swished Sir Jonathan and his candidate up to Shenstone. Sir Jonathan had ascertained that already eleven other candidates had offered themselves for Burchall's very snug berth. He himself had little doubt that his man would drop the field. But, as he allowed himself to admit, one never knew what a woman would do until she hadn't done any of the other things.

When Sir William Ireland had bought Shenstone Castle, he had bought a piece of English history and a landmark of its land. He had been too shrewd a man—if not too respectful a one—to interfere with it. He had left it, high up there, on its wooded hill, grey against the sombre, receding valley behind it; and below, far enough away to avoid all appearance of rivalry, he had built an immense, superb house, dated "To-morrow," and so had escaped, by the skin of his always troublesome and treacherous artificial teeth, the actual ostracism of the county. There were exactly a dozen reception rooms of various sizes and shapes in the white, wide-palace. In one of them Gore and his

companion found, at a *petit gouter* of unmistakable cocoa and digestive biscuits, Lady Ireland and her aunt, Miss Rowena Blundell.

Aunts are not what they were. But this one was. She was an aunt out of lavender and Cranford, not perhaps sixty, but belonging indubitably to the eighteenth-fifties. Small, made of ivory delicacy, and ten thousand forgotten little bigotries of mind and air and speech, exquisitely dressed from—it was to be believed—a wardrobe that had survived the fashions of eighty outrageous years—she emanated an extraordinary energy and force. A tiny movement of her miraculous lemon-coloured gloves, or of the pencil-line of her eyebrow, expressed a thousand volumes of invincible self-control and self-confidence. Her little ghostly laugh, like the tinkle of an unearthed musical-box, reduced the present to inane vulgarity. She was the veriest aunt Gore had ever seen off the stage.

The big room was under the auntly spell of this little cold anachronism. Lady Ireland's reception of her visitors was merely a gracefully agreeable and perfectly colourless interruption. Miss Blundell's thin treble took charge of the conversation. The bird-like movements of her cameo profile, her little dips and nibblings at her cup and her biscuit, reduced the first half-hour of the visit to a Robertsonian first-act. Fortunately, she had letters to write. Her niece led her away to write them elsewhere. Sir Jonathan looked at Gore before their hostess returned, and said :

"My God! I nearly married that woman once——"

Lady Ireland returned, a finished example of the elastic young woman of the day—and, in point of looks, an unusually charming one. The dominant note of her clear-skinned, healthy face was courage and preparedness for all chances: its eyes had that quick vigilance, and its chin that sweep and jut of jaw that

have so curiously pronounced themselves in the English girl's profile in the past ten years.

The gravity of her smile of repose, and a slightly frigid sedateness of air and manner and gesture, sat very delightfully upon her youth—as did the charming age-old “Cicely” by which Sir Jonathan addressed her. She looked a full five years younger than her twenty-seven—without any trace, save perhaps one of quiet disillusionment, of the trial and strain which her husband's death had imposed upon her. As did most young women, she found at once a shrewd, wise kindness in Gore's grey eyes. But clearly, though she jumped at once into the business that had brought her visitors to her, she continued to take dispassionate stock of him through the smoke of her cigarette as they talked.

Rather to his relief—for she had clearly no hesitation whatever about the point-blank question—he discovered that, as for most West Country folk, England was for her London and the West Country. It was comparatively easy to evade her somewhat vague explorations into the Shires in which, she was led tactfully to understand, her future head steward had acquired the knowledge of which she was invited to become the employer. Sir Jonathan and his candidate rose to leave with the assurance that Colonel Gore would receive the most careful consideration.

There were, indeed, echoes of a commercial directness and curtness in the laughing voice—echoes perhaps borrowed from that most commercial person, the late Sir William Ireland. A hard, young woman in some places, Gore reflected, as he bowed his leave-taking. He found it as difficult to associate her with hysterics and fainting fits as with blood-stained penknives. Yet the strength of her small hand, as it held his with frank friendliness, surprised him. His eyes fell to it for a

moment. It was impossible not to ask that obvious question. It was his business to ask it. Did that strong, little hand still hold a secret fast in its grip?

Very bright blue eyes, nut-brown hair, a mouth not so clean-cut as the rest of the face—a predilection for tertiary colours—charming legs—— So the inventory of Cicely Ireland completed itself. Like all inventories, it contained practically everything except what one looked for.

As they turned, all three, towards the door leading to departure, two more characters of the tragedy stepped out from between the crimson covers of R.10693/78 K. abruptly. The door opened and a pale, slight girl came in languidly, followed by a youngish man in riding things. Gore found himself introduced to Miss Copeland and Mr. Burchall.

That swift, merciless, automatic judgment with which one human being appraises another in a glance, would have informed Gore that Miss Copeland came from the class one labelled "lower-middle," even if he had not been aware of the father who had been a foreman in the brick and tile works of Messrs. Ireland & Bunton. She had the smiling, momentary prettiness of the "young lady" of the shop or the office, marred by pallor and thin cheeks and shadowed eyes, but with all the evanescent allurements of her kind—bright, intelligent, even clever, yet devoid of all mandate of intellect. Her clothes were delightful, and expensive; she wore them like a provincial mannequin. Her manner was a careful copy of Lady Ireland's with embarrassing reminiscences of the foreman. Her speech, Heaven knew how, was delicious—her greatest asset—a laughing, cajoling, reckless little music that induced one easily to remember that we were all made of the same quite unimportant dust. Naturally, she

was elaborately made-up. Her straw-coloured hair was moulded to her small, sleek head like a cap of arabesqued and burnished brass.

Her pallor was almost alarming. From Sir Jonathan's solicitous inquiries, Gore learned that she had been in poor health for some time past. He learnt also two other things concerning her which arrested his attention. She was staying at Shenstone Castle as a guest, and had been doing so for some months past. And she was engaged to marry Mr. Burchall—it appeared, at an early date. Neither Mr. Cavendish nor his boss had mentioned either of these details, which must, it seemed, have been known to them. Gore wondered a little why—a thing he was to do again before he left the room.

He was acutely aware that Burchall was looking at him, and looking at him in an extremely unfriendly way. Now, he was quite prepared to like Burchall on sight, and quite accustomed to being liked by people whom he liked. And his interest promptly abandoned Miss Copeland when her fiancé, in response to Lady Ireland's "This is Colonel Gore," said, after a deliberately amused and impertinent stare, "Oh yes," completed the stare, smiled, and turned away.

But a fine, athletic, good-looking, clean-bred sportsman, Mr. Dudley Burchall, very manly in his tweeds and cords, tanned and hard, sound, tough stuff—Miss Copeland—she was disposed to display her possessorship just a little ostentatiously—laid hands upon his sleeve to direct his attention back to her. The engagement-ring made itself frankly conspicuous upon one hand. The other dropped out of sight again before Gore had seen it very clearly. But the left one lingered until, laughingly, Burchall disembarrassed himself of it and turned to talk to Sir Jonathan of the morning paper.

The Rolls went out of its way a little to inspect the house which Burchall was so anxious to vacate, and to pass through the straggling, lazy, picturesque village. As they swished past the spruce grey-and-white estate-office, another character stepped out from between the crimson covers.

"Hullo," exclaimed Sir Jonathan, bending forward to peer through a rain-stained window. "There's old Theobald. Off to the Shenstone Arms, I suppose." He waved, sighed: "Pity. Good old chap. One of the finest shots I've ever seen, still. I suppose you remember he was mixed up in a rather unfortunate way, with poor old Ireland's death."

Gore had just time to see the broad back of a heavily-built man beneath an immense umbrella.

"Yes, yes," he nodded. "I recall the name Theobald."

"He has never got over it, poor old devil. I hear he's going down the hill pretty fast now. Shocking pity. I know all his folk well. I remember Claud Theobald when every girl in the county was in love with him."

3

Not much else to see in Shenstone. They passed a trim house with a trim plate, "HENRY W. MAUDESLEY, M.D., F.R.C.S." But they did not see that patient comforter of fertile mothers.

"Excellent," said Mr. Cavendish, upon receiving Gore's report. "We'll have a little chat about Mr. Burchall, if you like, at half-past three, in my room. I find this air rather relaxing, and—er—I fear that Westshire cream has over-tempted me. I rather fancy that until half-past three I shall . . . er . . . rest."

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Sir Jonathan was quite willing to chat about the former owner of Shenstone Castle and his sensational exit, and lunch prolonged itself over coffee agreeably, if not very enlighteningly.

The general local opinion upon the affair, it transpired, had been adverse to Theobald, but not definitely condemning. He was a rash-tempered, physical-viewed man—he had been suffering under a very great and humiliating grievance—he had been, without the slightest doubt, much the worse for drink, probably quite incapable of realising what he was doing. The general local supposition was that he had got up and entered Sir William's compartment, intending, in an impulse of drunkenness, to reopen the argument about his dismissal. He had discovered that Lady Ireland had left her husband—had probably ascertained, from the sound of voices, that she was at the far end of the carriage, shut up with Ingoldsby. He had looked at the sleeping figure, crumpled up in its corner—a type utterly hostile and repelling to him. It had been well known that he had regarded his employer as an infernal old bounder. He had said to himself: "That plobby old money-grubber, with his millions, is the thing that is going to turn me out on the world at fifty-three. Here I am, broken down, an old man already, only good to potter about on a pony, or with a gun and a dog—Who is going to give me a pound a week? Not a living soul. The end of me is going to be misery in London for a few years, and then a cot in a hospital for a bit—if I don't go potty before that happens."

A perfectly natural and human and likely thing for the poor beggar to have said to himself. Well—of course, one has to be down and out to know what it's really like. In that respect, it's like having an express engine's wheels making a track across one's stomach. But probably poor old Theobald had had a pretty clear

view of it at intervals during the preceding ten years. Fright and hate had welled up in his heart—welled over. He had remembered the knife—a big penknife. He had seen opportunity—opportunity that might be made baffling—impossible to fasten upon him. He had seen red. He had rushed back into his own compartment, snatched up the knife in its brown paper, snatched the knife out from its covering. He had done this as he moved back stealthily to his prey. His powerful hand had closed about the gurgling throat— Sir William Ireland had been a crock, physically, and could have put up no fight against a man like Theobald. Pretty quickly the struggling had ceased. A couple of blows with the knife—evidently quite unskilful and wild ones in their delivery, even if their objective had been shrewd enough—and the thing was done. He had gone back to his compartment and had probably really been buried in drunken sleep when the porter had wakened him up at Shenstone Station.

Of course, Gore reminded himself, this West Country was not Wimbledon or Ealing. It was a country of wide, open spaces where very little stood between one and one's God—a country that had hunted and killed from time immemorial and still hunted and killed, as a man's natural business. With very different eyes did this sporting countryside look upon its calm, unshocked theory as to Sir William's death from the eyes, say, of a leader-writer of the *Morning Post*, however broad-minded and however keen a golfer or fisherman. By very different standards from those of the Central Criminal Court did the descendants of the Westshire breed—the hardiest in England—judge one of its own kith and kin. To them this elderly money-maker with his bricks and his furnaces had clearly remained an intruder and an alien, something that jangled all their traditions and soured their pleasant, kindly blood.

Sir Jonathan was a case in point. Gore looked across at him through the haze of cigar-smoke, and saw as kind-hearted and human a man as ever breathed. But he had no difficulty whatever in apprehending that, if Sir Jonathan believed in his theory about Theobald—and he obviously believed in it for all practical purposes—his sympathies were, none the less, entirely with Theobald. Entirely, at any rate, to the extent of giving him the sporting benefit of the doubt—without having the slightest doubt worth talking about.

At any rate it was clear that Shenstone and the neighbourhood had refused to turn its back upon one of its most familiar and most popular figures. A woman here and a woman there—safe matrons, with married sons, now, tuners of the “County” tone—had remembered that Claud Theobald had turned her head for half an hour one night thirty years ago. Hard-riding, not-too-sober squires and yeomen-farmers had remembered that no better man had ever thrown his leg over a horse or bagged a rocketing right and left down the wind. If he insisted upon going to the devil, well—many a better man of the old breed had gone that way. Not a finger would one of them raise against him.

“All that silly business about chaps in leggings running about the station like rabbits,” snorted Sir Jonathan, “was dam nonsense. And, of course, the attempt to drag Burchall into it was an absolutely outrageous business. That infernal scoundrel—what’s his name—the chap that said he saw Burchall’s car—the Jew rag-man——”

“Lahn——?”

“Yes—Lahn. An unspeakable scoundrel. Ought to have been prosecuted for perjury. But, of course, those damned mutton-heads of policemen made him a hero. Vermin. There are too many of these filthy mongrels settling down in Waterley——”

" Burchall's engagement is quite a recent affair ? "

Sir Jonathan's lips parted guardedly. " M'yes. As a matter of fact, I heard about it only about a week ago. Nice girl, Miss Copeland. Shockingly delicate, though. Worst attempt at a seat I ever saw. Burchall's going to have some anxious moments if she musters up courage to hunt. Fortunately she's nervous. So you had a couple of years at the big stuff in Africa, eh ? Lucky beggar——"

So the worthy baronet. It was quite evident that he preferred to talk of anything but Burchall's matrimonial intentions.

Mr. Cavendish looked much better for his abstinence from lunch. But he, too, displayed a certain coyness, when Gore steered their little confidential chat towards a somewhat puzzling point.

" I assume," he said, " that there were considered reasons why the evidence in the authorities' possession did not lead to any active steps against anyone ? "

Mr. Cavendish shrugged his shoulders mildly. " Naturally. Against whom could we have taken active steps—without the risk of inflicting, perhaps, grave injustice ? "

Gore judged it expedient to agree with this official virtue. He said, " Quite. Of course." He did not say that *that* risk was taken in practically every criminal case that crystallised into a trial. But he ventured to echo the local opinion. " Apparently around here most people seemed to have made up their minds."

Mr. Cavendish's benevolence became abruptly tart.

" They *had* made them up, you mean," he snapped. " So had we. I think I may say that, if Burchall hadn't made this determined attempt to dissociate himself from Shenstone Castle, Mr. Theobald would be in gaol now."

"Burchalls' engagement was, I gather, quite unexpected?"

"Quite. As you are aware, this girl—Miss Copeland—does not belong to his world. She has no money—and quite inconvenient associations. Burchall is hard up, and somewhat fussy about family and standing and so forth. He has given up a most comfortable position and £2000 a year—£1000 under Sir William's will and £1000 which Lady Ireland allows him—to live in a small house, with a wife whom every woman in the neighbourhood will call on, when she's out, and ignore ever afterwards. Now, Mr. Burchall is not a complicated person. He hasn't done this for any reason that doesn't seem a better one than any he can find for not doing it. The girl is pretty—very pretty, indeed— And Lady Ireland has had her under her wing at Shenstone Castle for five or six months, training her in the way she should go as Mrs. Burchall— You know that, of course?"

"I inferred it this morning," Gore replied somewhat dryly. "I had not learned it officially. If five or six months— Is one to gather that Burchall's engagement has been kept quiet for that time—until a week ago?"

Mr. Cavendish looked very wise behind his glasses.

"Well," he said. "One gathers what one can. That's what we're asking *you* to do."

He stood up, and patted the place where discomfort had troubled him, cautiously, but on the whole with reassurance.

"But your question raises an interesting point. An extremely interesting point. I sincerely trust that Sir Jonathan's tea will not include cream or crumpets to-day. My digestive tone has recovered dangerously. If I am unduly tempted, I shall fall, I fear."

Sir Jonathan's tea that afternoon included *both* cream and crumpets. Mr. Cavendish was extremely

silent and thoughtful during the journey back to London that evening.

Two days later a telegram informed Gore that the offer of his services had been accepted. He was requested to present himself at Shenstone Castle on the Monday of the following week.

There was an interval of three days to fill up. His man Stephens packed with anxious care, under his personal supervision, and he travelled down the same night to instal himself at the Royal Albert Hotel in Waterley's High Street. Stephens and Shamil were to follow presently—an arrangement which was to cost Gore a good deal of trouble.

4

His first step was to clear up some minor details, a task in which he found the Westshire Constabulary most helpful. The Inspector in charge at Waterley was, indeed, so anxious to be helpful that he rang Gore up within a quarter of an hour from the time at which he signed the register of the Royal Albert—a promptitude by which Gore professed himself duly obliged.

All the routine procedures had been adhered to—Searches made, measurements taken, times and distances verified, the reliability of witnesses exhaustively inquired into. The Yard had spread itself on the case—three of its brightest stars had wasted their brilliance on it for six months.

“Finger marks?”

“Some on the knife—Gannett's. Some, of course, on the door-handles and window-straps—Heaven knows whose. Not one on Sir William himself. It's certain whoever choked him, did it through a covering—a handkerchief, probably.”

"The bloodstains in the corridor and Ingoldsby's compartment?"

"Made by her feet and his. No doubt about that. We've got her shoes and his boots."

"The brown paper in which the knife was rolled up?"

"That hasn't turned up. The line was searched within four hours of the murder, from Westpool to Shenstone, and right on down to North Pier."

"What did the interest in Pilker's squabble amount to?"

"Well," the Inspector smiled. "Pilker had been opening his mouth a bit. You see Hopgood's what you'd call a gentleman, or very near it. He had a commission during the war. Father was a doctor in Nottingham. Nothing left for a big family when he went. So Hopgood became a shover when he was demobbed. Pilker's a Red—the hopeful sort. Also, he stayed at home. So when Hopgood cut him out for a bit with the Carr girl, he got very mad. He spread it about that Phoebe Carr had got it out of Hopgood that *he* knew how the job had been done, and why, and that it hadn't been by old Theobald either. Somehow they took up the yarn for a bit in Shenstone, hot. Hopgood couldn't get a drink in the village for a fortnight or so. But they got tired of that idea, and became just as sure that Pilker had taken the knife from Theobald's compartment while Gannett had been away looking for the stationmaster, and thrown it under the seat in Sir William's compartment. They said, brilliantly, he would have taken it out of the brown paper, before he did that—Hopgood's name was on the knife, as well as on the brown paper. The idea, of course, was to make trouble for Hopgood."

"It seems a rather rapid and subtle invention for a country railway porter, on the spur of a rather exciting

moment," Gore suggested. "Of course, one knows that when the countryman *wants* to be spiteful——"

The Inspector agreed with an exhausted nod.

"Hopgood knew nothing about it," he said. "Nobody round Shenstone believes, now, that he ever did. He has left his job at Shenstone Castle, you know—for some time past."

"Where is he now? Still shoveling?"

"Yes. With two old Misses Frazer. They live up in one of those new houses that have been built at the edge of Albuckham Park. Doesn't seem very happy about his job, though. I had a word with him yesterday, in the Cornmarket here. He seemed very down about things. I rather fancy he'd been hoping to get taken on by Mr. Burchall when he left Lady Ireland's service. But, of course, Mr. Burchall's not going to want two chauffeurs *now*. He's going to miss that £1000 a year. So that put the tin hat on it for Hopgood, and he had to sign on with the Miss Frazers at ten bob less a week."

"Why did he leave Lady Ireland? He had a good job with her?"

The Inspector replied to that question with a nod. It was not known why Hopgood had left Lady Ireland. It was known that he did not like Lady Ireland, and that she had never liked him, and had only kept him on because Sir William had made rather a fuss of him.

"Hopgood had nothing to do with it," the Inspector concluded.

Nevertheless, when Gore introduced "Beechinor?" the worthy officer prefaced his reply with three words significant of his condition of mind with regard to the case. "Of the two," he said, as if he spoke of two puppies or two neckties for his mufti, "Beechinor seemed to me the more likely to know something about it."

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He was silent for a reflective moment.

"He does still," he went on. "He's a dangerous kind, Beechinor. Hopgood might kill a man. But he wouldn't plan to kill a man. I *think*. And this job was *planned*."

But he added. "Too well planned for Beechinor, if it *was* planned. If it wasn't planned, of course, either Hopgood or Beechinor, if either of them chanced on a chance——"

"Still, Colonel," the excellent, anxious man wound up again in doubt, "I never took any great stock in those leggings. Everyone round here wears leggings. They go to bed in 'em. If you think of any of your friends between here and Cornwall, you think of him in leggings. And, once you start in this business with leggings, you start upon the entire population of half the county——"

But he added: "Of course, there are all kinds of leggings."

And so on.

All this was tired stuff. It came from the clean, curly, gentle-voiced Inspector automatically. He had been saying these things, and hearing them said, and hoping some of them might be true, and feeling sure that none of them were, for twelve months, until—decent, willing hound of the law—his brain was incapable even of making a fresh start if it got the chance.

It was quite clear. The authorities had battered and hammered at the puzzle for a year, crawled over and over it, mauled it over and over, until they were sick and tired of it. The Inspector's was a brain to be avoided like death. Gore got away from it civilly as quickly as he could. This job-of-work had to be begun again from the beginning.

5

The siding——

It was mid-November now—only a fortnight later in the year and shorter of daylight than the last week of October. Lighting conditions would be, roughly, the same as on the evening of the murder, any time after five o'clock. No fog or frost available, as it happened. And *now*, of course, two powerful arc-lamps bathed in blue distinctness the triangular space guarded a year ago by a single, twittering old gas-lamp. One would have to allow for that.

But Gore started off from the Royal Albert a good deal before five o'clock on the muggy, unfriendly afternoon following his arrival. His objective was the embankment, approached by the long, twisting cul-de-sac along the river called Tip and Run Lane, and an ascent to the upper level of the embankment—at this point not more than twenty feet above the river level—by the steps reserved for the use of the Company's servants.

Waterley faded away southwards into the raw, straggling hideousness of jobbing builders' speculations. From the south-west-bearing main road (a landscape tapestried with golden trees spread away that way still to the hills that cut off the finest county in England from the second-best) Gore turned right hand at a bridge over a dirty flush of winter water, passed amongst a huddle of cottages old and new, and found himself hedged in on either side by a flat panorama of unloved, scarred waste land, fenced without interest, overgrown with thistles, nettles, tin cans, brutally damaged kettles, and—pathetic survivals—here and there a rotten, fallen tree-stump. The boundary of this prospect was, upon his left hand, the sallow, swirling, ill-odoured river, on

his right, some considerable way distant still, the steep slope of the railway embankment, which at this angle formed a murky semicircle.

A willow here and there. The rutted, stony, wet road brought him past the untidy, unsavoury cottage of Marius Lahn, and the gate behind which Marius had said he had seen a Sunbeam two-seater. Marius himself was unloading his barrow of a load in the roadway, sorting his unsavoury loot into heaps in the grass that flowed out under the wire fencing of the fields. He was a filthy, villainous bird of prey, grey-faced, with an immense, tumid red nose dangling out over two wet red lips and a skin inlaid with dirt.

There was nothing to learn about him. But since they two were alone on the desolate, swampy flatness of the world, Gore asked, "Can one work back towards the town this way?"

"Ow de 'ell I know," gobbled Mr. Lahn furiously, after a glance.

He returned to his rags. His gobbling pursued Gore. "Ow de 'ell I know. Bloody fool. Wat de 'ell ask me. Ow de 'ell I know——" Quite a well-defined type.

The track—it was now no more; even the fences had gone—ended up abruptly against the escarpment of the embankment. On one side was a paper-strewn mountain of obscenity, the rubbish dump. A flight of steps rose in the face of the slope to the level of the rails. The notice-board had evidently been repainted last year and the words "PRIVATE. FOR THE USE OF EMPLOYEES OF THE COMPANY ONLY" had been supplemented by a vigorous "*Trespassers will be Prosecuted.*" Gore climbed up. Dusk was falling rapidly now; a train hammered by with lights on. He seated himself on the embankment wall, lighted his pipe, and waited for authentic darkness.

He moved on then. The two big new arc-lamps were conspicuous—the biggest and newest lights of all the kinds of lights that were scattered over the embankment. He went and stood under them, and measured distances—much more accurately than the station-master's chain had measured them. Yes—the goods yard entrance was a long way off. The number of wagons strewn about the goods sidings was enormous. Why could so many trucks be spared to live in idleness? The platforms of the station looked a long way off—quite a walk. As for the East Signal Cabin—what the signalman could have seen of the siding, by the light of a fog-muffled gas-lamp, did not appear of importance.

Everything was pretty much as one had imagined it—extraordinarily unlike in every detail, quite like as a completed picture. A train ran in from Westpool to stop and hiss at platform 1. Now, what murder had been done this evening in one of those grimy little boxes with their little yellow windows—?

(That point about the lavatory—that remained a doubtful possibility still, of course— Probably would remain one until it didn't matter that it had remained one—)

From where he stood, he could follow the course of Welder Road, pricked out of the darkness by a few widely-spaced lamps. It passed diagonally under the embankment: the tunnel through which it passed was right beneath his feet. He left the siding and retraced his course a little way along the south-west arm of the embankment, to a point about half-way between the siding and the head of the steps by which he had ascended from Tip and Run Lane, but at the other side of the rails.

There, on the up-rails side, was another flight of steps

for the Company's employees only—the flight leading down into Welder Road. He stood at their head for a little while, looking down.

Running down from his feet, in short zigzags set in the face of the embankment, were the steps, with their greasy guard-rail, ending in a little recess with another notice-board, down beside the footpath of the road. Beside the steps an oddly narrow, ugly little house was built into the embankment, so that it had no visible back save its upper storey, which lay about ten feet below the level of the embankment's top. This, the only dwelling-house in sight, must be the lodging-house of Madame Brochard—not a very inviting situation for lodgers, with the ceaseless clang and shriek and roar of the station shaking it day and night. It lay all in darkness, save for the faint glimmer of an unseen light illuminating the open door of the upper back room. A figure crossed the doorway with a candle, disappeared. Madame Brochard, no doubt.

The well of the road below was a desolate abyss, with only the dismal, useless flicker of a gas-lamp fixed in the arch of the tunnel to save it from total blackness. But over the high wall across the road, crouched like a black beast with flaming wounds, lay Messrs. Ireland & Bunton's Brick and Tile Works, the vital parts of the beast farthest away from the tunnel mouth.

Gore went down, stood at the tunnel-mouth, threw a glance at the recess at the foot of the steps, and at the lightless, narrow façade of the little house. The moving candle reappeared on a lower floor. A small figure struggled in silhouette with a refractory window. Perhaps Madame, if it was she, had caught sight of him, standing there idly by the tunnel, Gore reflected. No doubt, since the murder, the good lady must have felt uncomfortable about loitering men. He decided to ascend by the steps to the top of the embankment again.

To his surprise, as he reached the little semicircular recess from which the steps rose—the recess through which he himself had passed a few minutes before—a man's figure emerged from it like a Jack-in-the-box. The ray of a pocket-torch flashed full into Gore's eyes. Without apology the man brushed past him and went off up the road towards the entrance to the Tile Works.

Gore stood looking after the tall, strongly built figure until it disappeared, swaying like a marionette, round the lighter edge where the wall turned. He had been almost completely blinded by the torch, but not altogether. He had no doubt whatever that the figure which had just disappeared from sight was Burchall's.

That was, perhaps, a curious coincidence. But all coincidences were a little curious. A much more interesting thing was that, whoever owned the torch, carried about with him also a smell at which Gore's nostrils had wrinkled themselves reminiscently. Not a perfume that one forgot, that heavyish, sweetish sourness. A dangerous perfume to flavour oneself with, one would have thought. A very odd one for Mr. Dudley Burchall to carry. The last perfume one would expect to meet in a back road in Waterley.

Certainly one ought to find some less faded word than "coincidence." Why meet Burchall *there*—?

6

Gore made Claud Theobald's acquaintance on the following Monday in the lounge of the Royal Albert. The early afternoon contained no train stopping at Shenstone. Theobald came up to Waterley—in the car of which he had the sole use—to fetch him down.

Theobald—certainly a rather pathetic, gone-to-seed

sportsman now, with a skin that had lost its fat and sagged emptily—proved, as Gore had anticipated, a much more intelligent and complicated person than the bald question and answer of his statement had exhibited him as being. But, though he had spruced himself up for the occasion and had put on a sad, youthful jollity with a rather overdone, white low-crowner, the man was visibly broken. His eyes, smiling always when they looked openly into Gore's, shamefaced and doubtful, when they took furtive views of him, were painful to search into. Of course, he wanted to settle down in the bar of the Royal Albert (of course he called the hoity-toity barmaid, "Betty, my dear") and make an afternoon of it. He had come into it, reeking. For policy's sake, Gore swallowed a whisky and juggled another back to the barmaid. But after that he gave the poor old toper short shrift, bounced him into the exclusive-use car, and, for safety's sake, drove it, himself, without waiting for invitation, down to Shenstone, where he was anxious to interview Lady Ireland in time to settle in his new quarters before dark. His energy proved unnecessary. Lady Ireland was invisible, Miss Copeland having been seized with another of her violent attacks of biliousness immediately after lunch.

It was Burchall who announced to him his liberty to instal himself and his household goods forthwith. If Burchall had meant to be rude at their first meeting, he had repented. His manner was charmingly friendly, though visibly much disturbed by his fiancée's indisposition. If it was he who had bobbed up out of the recess in Welder Road, he made no allusion whatever to having recognised Gore by the light of his torch. Nor did he carry any perfumes upon him that afternoon. He whisked Gore from the estate office to the snug, pretty agent's house on a sunlit, timbered slope,

about half a mile away, which was to be his residence—offered himself for a day's "going into things," turned over to Gore a very nice-looking little nag of the breed that hunts the runnable stag in that part of the world, and left him with the most benevolent of nods.

Theobald, who arrived with a 0·22 under one arm and a couple of rabbits a-dangle over the other, assisted at the close of these introductions, and, inviting himself to stay, drunk Burchall's whisky while Gore unpacked, after Burchall's departure, until he remembered Miss Copeland's illness suddenly. Unexpectedly, he heaved up from his arm-chair, and went off with his paraphernalia, one foot dragging noticeably through the yellow drifts of leaves in the little drive.

He must have reached the drive-gates—indeed, Gore, who had already returned to his unpacking upstairs, had heard the gates click to—when his fuddledom decided to return to say something forgotten. He came with his dragging, heavy step along the walk under the windows by which Gore was busy.

"Oh—er——" he signalled.

Gore looked out.

"Yes?"

"Oh—ah—I just wanted to say, olefla'—'ll erschuse me takin' liberry I know—I just wanted to say this, that I hope you'll be comforble an' all that, down here. I'll keep you straight. You just come to me whenever you're up a tree. But that isn't what I want to say. What I want shay is, if you're going to try to run me out of my job—well, other people tried that little game, and they didn't make much of a hand of it."

"My dear Mr. Theobald," Gore assured him, disentangling a ganglion of sock-suspenders, "I assure you——"

Theobald waved a big hand and, turning, dragged off down the drive again.

"Oh—a'ri'—a'ri'—— Only jush getting it ri' to start with."

Magic the shrill, tender dust of green gauze that clothes the spring boughs in a night. Majestic the summer plumage that hides branch and trunk in blue-and-purple shadowed caves. But Gore, for some reasons, had always loved the sparse yellow leaf or red that hung—as it seemed, unattached—here and there across the blue-black or grey-silver of boughs that would be altogether naked with the next night's wind. He sat with his tangle of sock-suspenders for some time, staring down from his bedroom window into the drive. There were beeches there, for yellow-flecked silver, and sweet chestnuts for black and all the reds, and the lovely bitter-sweet tang of the autumn's death. He was sensitive to such small, unimportant impressions.

Which was, perhaps, why his unpacking was ultimately left unfinished until much later that evening. Theobald was dull—deadly dull. But here and there a patch of interest brightened his decay—a memory of grace gone. Deadly dull—but he must be tackled. Inspector Kaye and his shrewd, energetic colleagues had tackled him and grassed themselves. No matter. The job's work must be begun at the beginning.

The man was scared to death.

(One used the cliché—"scared to death"—the quickest and handiest old label. Tired already of Theobald. Too dull a villain to look at from any point of view but full-face.) But one knew that a real fear of some obsessing kind was hidden in that large, round skull, behind that travesty of a big, jolly face.

Well, some men went sweating white at sight of a lighted petrol lamp. Some men fainted when a silk bandage took their blood pressure. Some men lived

all their days in agony of fear because of an umbrella stolen without intention. Gore had seen a murderer with the blood of fifty-three murders—mostly female—on his hands, vomit and squeal with fear when, for fun, a merry Scots sentinel had threatened to ram a piece of quite nice pork down his yellow neck. What bug of fright was biting this sad, elderly sportsman? Money? Whisky? Memory? Bad dreams o' nights? The vision of that inevitable, final dismissal, and its sequel—oblivion in the hell of London lodgings? Or simply liver?

It had not been possible to get a definite impression of the personal equation between Burchall's clean, sound, youthful healthiness, and this musty, elderly subordinate. Oddly, Gore had fancied a little that, of the two, the subordinate's eye had been the more steady, and his speech, when he had spoken in Burchall's presence—which had been rarely—the more assured and indifferent.

But, of course, that effect, quite possibly, had been due to Black and White——

One's thoughts passed over that slight bridge, however, to Burchall again. What *about* Burchall?

Gore had in his possession, to a halfpenny, the movements of Burchall's bank balance during the preceding twelve months. To Mr. Cavendish's knowledge, he had three accounts—one with the Western and Southern Counties Waterley branch, one with their branch in Westpool, and a third with the London and Provincial, Oxford Street, Branch. His stepfather's estate not having yet been administered, his income for the past year—apart from the salary of £1000 paid him by Lady Ireland—had consisted chiefly of such advances as the estate solicitors had been willing to make upon his

expectations. Sir William had left him, under sharp restrictions, an income of £1000 a year, chargeable upon the estate. From October to November he had made lodgments to the credit of his various accounts amounting to £1550. At the moment, two of his accounts were slightly overdrawn; the third—the Waterley branch account—showed a credit balance of £40.

Now why, in so unbrilliant a financial state, had he elected—on the verge of marriage to a girl without a penny of her own—to throw up a pleasant easy job, with £1000 a year—with a house and amenities worth at least another £600 or £700 a year, and a largesse from Lady Ireland of another £1000 a year?

Was one to suppose that the fret and nag of local gossip had passed the bearing-point, for Lady Ireland or for him—or for both. What *did* local gossip say of them? So far as he had been able to judge, from Sir Jonathan's gossip and Mr. Cavendish's discreet communications, and from the key of Lady Ireland's own references to her neighbourhood, Shenstone had almost forgotten about Sir William's having died, and had completely forgotten that he had ever lived. The village adored its young Lady Bountiful; her intimate friends were the Division Member's wife and young Lady Pattie Uffens, the daughter of the County's Lord Lieutenant. There was, it seemed, no malice that could alarm or disturb such an assured poise of popularity and regard and affection.

As for Burchall, Burchall had always been, and still undoubtedly was, the most dashing, popular, picturesque young male for ten miles around. He did everything, did it well—and everybody, it was quite certain, was only too eager to watch him do it or to do it with him.

But, of course, a drop of poison in a pot of honey—The fear of one tongue, perhaps still silent, would suffice.

As for the evidence of the bank accounts—— If Burchall had three, he might have a dozen. And, quite possibly, those loans of Lady Ireland's to the Managing Director of the estate might have continued after her husband's death—without appearing in any bank account——

And it might very well have seemed better that a decisive separation should appear to take place—one as decisive as Burchall's resignation of all interest in the estate.

But suppose that there had never been anything of any serious significance between Cicely Ireland and this young man who had lived at her elbow for five years or so? Well, that one malicious tongue might still fret perfect innocence into such a step. Hardly likely, *that* "might." If Burchall had nothing to fear—even if he had—he was the type to let fly a bunch of knuckles or a nailed boot rather than sneak to cover.

What was one to think, though, of Lady Ireland's view of this marriage with the penniless, undistinguished—if very beautiful—Miss Copeland. Miss Copeland had been made the Castle's guest for nearly six months—had apparently been receiving a course of social instruction and introduction in Lady Ireland's own circle of friendships. Would such pains have been taken with Miss Copeland—however beautiful—if there *had* been truth in Sir William's charge, that foggy, bitter afternoon at the Foundry—and if it was still the truth—camouflaged?

But, why camouflaged? If there was nothing to fear *now*, and if Dudley Burchall loved this adorable, adored girl, now free—why should he marry a typist in his stepfather's employment?—the daughter of one of his stepfather's foremen. That sort of thing still happened in the good old plum-duff of the serials upon

which the Tweeny and Buttons battered. But it wasn't done in Westshire yet, as a rule.

Suppose a love-affair *had* faded out—say, in the fierce light of a Coroner's inquest and a fine, fearless press? Suppose Mr. Burchall had gone under, really, to the charm of the really remarkably pretty young woman from the Brick and Tile Works?

After all, *that*—the quite innocent, and obvious solution—was, as usual, the most sensible and convincing one. If a young man loves a maid, any folly may be his, all the platitudes tell us; Cicely Ireland—one thought of her steady, sedate eyes, and sensitive mouth—was made of stuff passionate enough even to be kind to a woman loved by the man she loved. Burchall had done the honourable thing— And he would have his thousand a year—Lady Ireland would see to that.

There was that rather odd whiff of sour-sweet odour. A curious, isolated detail, that seemed to have nothing to do with the rest of Burchall. But Gore was quite certain that he had *not* mistaken the gassy, irritant tang, that is the breath of railway stations, for the smell of something very different—

Of course, if Burchall had been in Egypt during the war, he might have acquired an interest in that sort of thing—

Gore had continued to sit on his window-sill, his wisp of sock-suspenders still in his hand, looking down meditatively into the mellow, yellow decay of his drive. He never knew what induced him to get to his feet quickly at that moment, and toss the suspenders on to his dressing-table. As he did so, he heard a shower of plaster fall from the ceiling, near the door of the room, and, just later, the report of—he judged—a rook-rifle. He sprang back to the window.

But there was only the rustle of yellow leaves in the drive.

He walked across the room, considered the scar in the ceiling, and took a line along it out through the window. The shot had been fired at some distance, but not any great one—not, perhaps, more than eighty yards. He marked the estimated position of the firer—the steep bank and hedge bordering a sunk lane leading, between his paddock and his orchard, by a short cut to the church.

Was it only because Theobald's gun had been a little 0·22 rifle that he had believed the report that of a small charge? Did he really believe it possible that that fusty, obsolete old boozier could have tried to pot him sitting?

He made the round of the house and garden, and strayed in the drive and road vaguely for a while. But he saw and heard nothing to answer that question.

7

Burchall's maids had both been transferred, with his men-servants, to his own new quarters at The Warren. He had arranged, however, that a woman from the village should come up to look after Gore until the latter had made his own domestic arrangements. The woman from the village had not arrived when darkness fell. All preparations, however, had been made by Burchall's maid, before her departure, for a Westshire tea for the incoming tenant. Gore boiled a kettle on an electric stove, and, placidly forgetful of ripped ceilings, wallowed in ambrosial cream and divinely home-made raspberry jam.

After that performance, he browsed for a while upon a curious old deposit of pre-war literature left behind

in a ransacked bookcase, and then ascended to finish his unpacking—a business which took some little time. When he went downstairs again at half-past seven, the promised lady from the village had not presented herself. The uncleansed tea-things still lay about, but the memory of tea was fading. What was going to happen about dinner? The Royal Albert had been excellent at making out bills, but extraordinarily sketchy in its ideas about lunch.

Robert Orange beguiled half an hour. It would perhaps be prudent to ring up the Shenstone Arms and ask it to send up something cold—or go down to it and ask it for something hot. But it seemed undignified to proclaim one's house, on the first night of ownership, incapable of feeding its master.

The minutes passed—another half-hour. Some more *Robert Orange*. The silence of the woods about the house had come into it and found its way even up to the bedrooms. An owl, very angry with something. How far was that beastly inn away? About a mile, if one didn't know the short cut. Rather dark for short cuts to-night—black as pitch. Confounded nuisance that there wasn't even a chunk of cheese. Finally, Gore dined on bread and jam and tea, and then, determined not to be beaten by *Robert Orange*—of which he had now reached page 16—took it up to his bedroom, where the fire was still good. That in the sitting-room was moribund.

His attention had wandered from his book, and he was thinking regretfully of the 'nineties and of poor George Alexander in the authoress's *The Ambassador*, when the two electric lights by which he was reading, blinked out.

Extraordinarily mutely and calmly and deliberately. And leaving behind them an extraordinary sense of old company departed . . . and *new* company arrived.

From that moment onwards, he recalled afterwards, he felt sure that he was not alone.

Alone, perhaps, in the house . . . but not alone.

He got up and found a candle on the table beside his bed, and lighted it. It cost him some effort to go and draw down the blinds of both windows.

A trial of the various switches in the other upper rooms produced only desolate clicks. Possibly, he tried to think, a fusing at the other end. He recalled that Theobald had mentioned that the Castle manufactured its own current and supplied the whole estate. Doubtless there was someone still on duty at the dynamo—though it was after nine now——

There were plenty of candles about, however, and he was unwilling to begin his term of office by calls upon the Castle at a late hour. He emptied all the candlesticks in sight and returned to his fire and his book upstairs, ignoring doors and windows deliberately, and moving without haste. A chill, persistent, little wind had sprung up, and the house and the outer darkness were full of small sounds of uneasiness. The pitch-black night held no promise of frost, but was bitter with a damp, raw cold that made a blazing fire a pleasant thing. *Robert Orange* was improving, too. Gore had now reached page 23.

He was not a nervous or fussy man. But his thoughts had recurred several times during the course of the evening to the extraordinary incident which had covered his bedroom carpet with a powder of plaster. According to his calculation—necessarily a rough one—the bullet that had done the damage—in idiotic play or in still more idiotic earnest—had passed within an inch or so of the top of his head (as his head had been placed before he had risen to get rid of his sock-suspenders). Without fussiness, that was a fact one was disposed to

be a little irritated about. Of course it was quite easy to imagine a half-screwed, jocosely gentleman with a rabbit rifle under his arm, turning and seeing a friend sitting on a window-sill, and—sure that he was a first-class shot—startling him by a practical joke. Very funny, of course.

Gore put down John Oliver Hobbes once more, and, candle in hand, set out on a voyage of exploration, hoping to be able to pick up the course of the bullet after it had left his bedroom ceiling. But there were no means of doing this, he found, save by boring in through the roof from outside.

It would be interesting, however, to be quite sure that the shot had been fired from a 0·22. Upon reflection, he decided to ring up Theobald at the estate office, and ask him to have the bedroom ceiling put right early next day. It would be of interest, too, to discover what Theobald would say—if he wasn't in the private room off the tap of the Shenstone Arms, where he and his cronies foregathered of evenings.

The telephone was at the inner end of the hall which bisected the lower floor of the house. There was a guide on a hook—Shenstone 17 was the Castle, 18 the estate office, 23 the former agent's house—the house in which Gore now stood. Memorising the three numbers, he tried for the Shenstone exchange. It took him seven or eight minutes to be quite sure that the exchange was not to be got. Country exchanges usually weren't, he reflected, after seven or eight o'clock.

By accident, as he turned away, the light of the candle showed him a second instrument, a little farther along the shelf which served as a cabinet. Doubtless a direct wire to the Castle or to the estate office. He tried it at intervals for ten minutes or so, without result. Then he made another intensified assault upon the exchange. No result.

Now that was—even by itself, as a detached, accidental discovery—rather odd. Coupled with the failure of the lights—it was, possibly, quite odd. Coupled further with that and an unexplained 0·22 bore bullet—it was worth thinking about seriously.

Gore had suddenly a vision, very clear and very practical, of the particular small point in the darkness of the night which was at the moment his position in an interesting universe.

It has been said that the agent's house stood upon a pleasant slope, about half a mile from the estate office. A pleasant slope, that is to say, on a soft November day of fading golden bracken, blue-green pines, red and yellow sprayed beeches and chestnuts and elms, warmed by a sunlight with a hint of crisp frost in its mistiness. But not quite so picturesque on a raw November's night, perhaps—— To get to the agent's house from, say, the main Waterley-North Pier Road, as it passed the entrance gates of the Castle, one followed one of three courses. One went on half a mile along the main road, and then turned left-hand up a steep, overhung side road for another half-mile. Or one went in through the Castle gates, and branched off from the avenue by a side road, that ran into a pine wood, became a path, and emerged into clear daylight again at the agent's paddock. About half a mile, that way. Or—longest course of the three—one went on up the avenue to the Castle and then took a good, open side avenue which would bring one to one's destination in a panttechnichon, if one wanted to go there in one. But that route was a good mile longer than either of the other two. In any case the nearest inhabited building was the Castle lodge, something over half a mile distant by the shortest way.

Swiftly Gore considered the three roads of approach. It occurred to him then, that, as a road of possible retreat that night, none of them offered any strong

inducement—especially to a person unfamiliar with the ground and, unfortunately, without a pocket-torch.

(Stephens came in, at that point, for some pet names which belonged east of Suez and south of respectable literature. But there was a stable-lantern out in the harness-room. Better nip out and get it ?)

Gore jumped up with an exclamation. Great lord!—the horse—neither fed nor watered since half-past two, to his knowledge. Damned stupidity—— He got into a Burberry and a cap, and, candle in hand, passed out, through the kitchen and a succeeding passage, to the door leading into the yard.

There he paused. Every nerve told him that he was being watched. But he decided not to blow out his candle. He opened the door sharply and, shielding his light with a hand, crossed the yard rapidly but unhurriedly, found the lantern in the harness-room—of course, dry of oil. Now—where had he seen oil ? In the garage. The garage was empty and locked ; Burchall had locked it before he had gone away that afternoon and had handed over the key, to which he had attached those of the forage-shed and that of the house's front door and cellar. Where had those keys been laid down ? Probably in the dining-room. It was there that they had been handed over. Gore carried away the lantern, and then went into the next-door stable. His candle had already blown out three times. He relighted it again, and said a word to the horse to soothe its slight nervousness of a stranger. The sturdy animal, recognising a new friend, blew a cloud of welcoming smoke and returned to its bin. No need to have worried about feed ; plenty of it there, and two buckets of water at the side of the box were still full. A pat upon the quarter and another word. Confound it—the candle out again. Well, it would have to stay out until he got indoors. He shut the

doors of the stable, locked it, and drew the key out of the lock. His back was to the uneasy blackness of the yard again, as he did that. When he turned again towards the house, which he had left in eyeless darkness a second before, there was a light in the kitchen, and he could see a man standing beside the dresser, searching, candle in hand—staring out through one of the windows, as it appeared, directly at him.

A dozen strides and he was in the kitchen. A cool-eyed, cool-voiced young fellow in chauffeur's mufti stared at him.

"Want anything?" Gore asked.

"Just to see if I can do anything for you, sir," was the quiet reply, with still the cool stare. "Mr. Theobald asked me to look in on my way home from the village. I'm Miss Fraser's chauffeur."

"Oh yes," smiled Gore. "Hopgood, isn't it? No, thanks very much. I'm all right for the night. Miss Fraser lives farther out?"

"Farther up the Coombe, sir—along the road passing your gate— There are three or four new houses up there, on the Albuckham estate."

"How did you get in here?" Gore asked bluntly.

"By the hall door. Mr. Theobald gave me his old latch-key for you. I was to give it to you, sir."

"Thanks."

"Good-night, sir. Dark night."

The strong, vigorous steps retreated. Gore shut the front door, and, laying down his own candle, went out to the kitchen to collect that which Hopgood had lighted. The back door was still open. Better shut it.

He went along the narrow dark passage, raised a hand to find the latch. A spicker of flame over there by the harness-room—and all the weight of earth and heaven fell upon him.

He had been trying to open his eyes for years and years. And for years and years his ears had been opening and shutting, hearing those feet moving—coming and going—sometimes at the far side of the house—sometimes only a few yards away. Sometimes they stopped moving—for so long that it seemed that they had gone away for good. But just when that seemed so, they began to sound again—slowly—idiotically slowly—never coming to the right place, wandering about as if they were mad.

If one could make up one's mind to open one's eyes—— But they weighed tons and tons of the heaviest lead——

They were open.

He was looking up into the foggy aura of a candle, beyond which, glisteningly distinct as to the nose and chin, was a strange, old-fashioned face, clean-shaven, but adorned with extraordinary little thickets of whisker.

The mouth spoke, but, before any sound came from it, it opened and shut twice.

"By dammit," it said earnestly, "I'd a bet a quid you waz gone."

Gore decided to close his eyes again. The task of explaining things was too immense. His head swung sideways. A spear of burning agony shot through him from his left shoulder to the inmost corner of his soul.

By the evening of next day, Stephens—sometime Sergeant—had arrived with Gore's car and Shamil. The district nurse was in charge of a very feverish shoulder; the recreant lady from the village had been replaced by a very capable woman from the Castle. The doctor had called twice, and Lady Ireland once

. . . with gold and russet chrysanthemums and kindest inquiries. Theobald—who, oddly, had met with a slight accident on his homeward way from his visit to Gore—did not appear. Burchall, however, was in and out of the house all day, ordering everything for the comfort of his successor.

From him Gore learned how Beechinor, Theobald's henchman (out, of course, after the pheasants), had heard the shot and a cry. Ultimately he had decided to leave the pheasants, and had run down an odd groan and grunt to the back door of the agent's house. To his surprise he had discovered that they were issuing from the "New Gentleman."

Hopgood, it seemed, had not heard the shot. Now, Gore calculated that Hopgood had probably been about two hundred yards from the house when it had been fired——

The Shenstone police displayed a superb calmness in regard to the incident of the second shot. They did not learn for some little time that there had been a first.

8

The shoulder proceeded amiably, under Dr. Maudesley's care, to comfort, though it was going to take some time, the cheery, brusque little medico warned his patient, before it would feel like a really useful bang with a niblick. Gore, however, despite his physician's exhortations to assist Nature, remained placidly in bed for five days—for the reason that he preferred that Theobald should come and see him there. But Theobald's ankle took four days to recover suffi-

ciently to permit him to get driven over by Beechinor to make inquiries.

He came up into Gore's bedroom (*Robert Orange* lay upon the counterpane, open at page 98), limping, but bluffly large-voiced. "What the devil's?" and "How the devil's?" blew about gustily while he lighted a cigar. "Most extraordinary thing he'd ever known happen in his life." "Never heard a sound himself. That was the extraordinary part of it. Never heard a confounded sound."

His bloodshot eyes altered their trajectory to follow the smoke of his cigar. He saw the rip in the ceiling. "H'lo," he exclaimed. "What's Burchall been up to? He didn't tell me that he'd had a cyclone in."

Gore did not trouble to raise his eyes. "Oh, *that*——" he said tranquilly. "That happened the other night."

Theobald's ankle was troublesome just then. He stooped to loosen a lace. "This damned thing is still puffed up like a pumpkin," he complained, when his face appeared again, red and puffed, above the edge of the counterpane. "Happened the other night? What——? Were you trying to kill flies with a driver——?"

Scared—certainly. A bit more scared than he had looked five days ago. His face was all ablink and a-twitter this morning.

"Nothing broken in the ankle, I hope?" Gore asked, shifting the ground a little. His visitor was pleased and eased.

"Oh no, thanks. Just a bad twist. I slipped on a mess of mud and wet leaves. Hounds had been along the path and made a muck of it. But I shall be crocked for a bit, I'm afraid.

He fell into heavy silence, while Gore watched him agreeably. "Burchall been round?"

"Several times. Charming chap."

Theobald returned to his ankle. When he had done with it, he grunted, "Omeyes. Charming."

He did not return to the gash in the ceiling—went away, limping, and with a farewell burst of bluntness. Anything he could do—only too delighted——"

Somehow, as he went out through the doorway, he had the effect of a man who had had constant practice in shutting doors between his back and eyes that were watching it out of the room. He shut the door very slowly until the last inch. Then he finished the job, inaudibly, in a second instalment. In respect for a perforated shoulder, Gore wondered, or a perforated ceiling?

Below, in the drive, there was a long conversation between the soft-voiced zay-zay of Beechinor and his employer's loud staccato. The staccato was too intimate, the zay-zay too familiar. Bad signs. Beechinor's last audible remark was, "Whad 'ell be doin' gabbin' all 't mornin' keepin' I bidin' 'ere?" Theobald roared in reply, "Get home, you dam fool, and shut your silly mouth."

Bad signs.

By the way, nothing had been arranged about the repair of the ceiling.

And how, conceivably, had Theobald made that extraordinary slip: "I never heard a sound, myself. Not a confounded sound"?

The telephones had, however, been put in order, and the lighting. The electrician had not reported as to the estate cables. The wire connecting with Shenstone Exchange, however, had been broken, on the night of the "New Gentleman's" accident, somewhere along the footpath to the Castle gates, by the fall of a rotten oak branch.

A call from the Castle, shortly after lunch, invited

Gore to tea by the voice of its mistress. The sedate tones at the other end, apologising for delayed hospitality with the excuse of Miss Copeland's illness, were very deliberate. Gore had a view of himself engaged in a crook-play telephone scene in "The Whanger" or "The Basher." With difficulty he prevented himself from staggering and leaving his telephone with his forehead clasped in a frantic hand. Had a red light glowed out in the wall of the hall, he felt he would have simply nodded and said, "Just so." Instead, he went back to his coffee, and spent a quarter of an hour wondering why Lady Ireland had ended: "I'm sure I shall be all alone, except for Captain Ingoldsby. Miss Copeland is deserting me again this afternoon, naughty thing. You have never met Captain Ingoldsby? — Westshires. Quite a dear. Do come. We both saw your Central African film. We're dying to talk to you about it."

Just so——

9

He set off early by the upper and longer road to the Castle, walking a little groggily, but glad to be out again. Five days had wrought great changes: the black and grey stems and branches were well-stripped now. The birds had found out that it was going to be a hard winter: the hollies along the way, clustered thickly with scarlet when he had last seen them, had been stripped to a few berries apiece. The air was bitter cold, but bracing. Gore trusted that there would be hot scones for tea—and someone else besides Captain Ingoldsby. He wanted rather to get Ingoldsby to himself for a few minutes, if possible.

This hope was pleasantly gratified. He found his

hostess surrounded by a roundish dozen of visitors—mercifully not including the aunt, who had departed. Ingoldsby had come accompanied by his O.C. at the Depot, Colonel Pitt-Saunderson, and a Major Bruce of the Queens, a glimpse of whose hard-bitten, ugly face wreathed Gore's in a grin of pleasure. They had met last, eight years before, in a dressing-station behind the Canal. Bruce, staring, said: "You look younger, somehow, old chap." "Just what I was thinking about you, old chap," Gore agreed. They stared again, smiled and separated. Gore found Lady Ireland's eyes fixed upon their meeting with a gratifying interest. Her smile warmed to a flash of friendliness; one of her hands patted a place beside her on a big Chesterfield, invitingly. He realised that he had had, perhaps, a piece of good fortune. Bruce's cordiality had, it seemed, dispelled some doubts.

Now—what doubts?

Someone, in Shenstone or near it, without any doubt whatever, was aware or suspected that the New Gentleman was not merely or all what he was striving to be. Gore thought there was no use in refusing to accept the obvious fact for once. But he had not thought it likely that, if Lady Ireland shared that knowledge, or suspicion of it, she would have advertised the fact. It was possible, of course, that Bruce had been invited simply to embarrass him. He accepted the invitation of the little, imperious hand, and answered her solicitude as to his shoulder with his most charming gratitude—a very charming one. For most women—even youthful ones—his twinkling grey eyes, his youthful figure, his dash and his good-humoured drawl, excused an undue nearness to fifty. Lady Ireland, apparently, found him worthy of an attention which, for ten minutes or so, excluded her other guests. (Her sedateness, of course,

was merely an accident—probably a trait inherited from a grand-mother—without any personal significance for its present owner.) She was as gay and as sparkling for ten minutes as a grey and brown burn in the sunlight.

But at the end, just before she rose to abandon him for Mrs. Pitt Sanderson and a Canon who combined an interest in the Sitwells with an obvious descent from the gorilla, came the casual question :

" You and Major Bruce are quite old friends ? "

" Well, 1917, I suppose, is a long, long time ago ? "

That increased her casualness.

" But you have met since 1917—— ? "

" No."

" Oh. Do go and amuse Mrs. Clarridge for me, won't you ? "

Major Bruce, as a reference and voucher for a New Gentleman, was, after all, not quite so reassuring—Gore attached himself to Mrs. Clarridge, the Master's wife, a daughter of Sir Jonathan Carvel-Pryde and also a fanatical worshipper of Cockers. The Darwinian Canon took the Sitwells away somewhere else. That left a pretty brown girl, of unknown name, and Captain Ingoldsby as immediate neighbours. Ingoldsby, a rather amateur Captain of the new régime, but agreeably unashamed of his youthfulness, leaned across.

" Hope you're feeling better, sir ? "

" Oh yes," screamed the brown girl—one of the new kind that treats males of all ages as of eight years of age—" Do tell me. Father is so perfectly thrilled. He didn't realise at first that it was you who had got it in the neck, so to speak. You haven't met Father ? But do tell me all about it for the Poor Old Dear. You know, *his* theory, ever since the—you *know*—has always been that there is someone in Shenstone or somewhere round here, doing a what-do-you-call-it stunt—you

know—Jekyll and the other old thing— He says——”

Mrs. Clarridge had visibly objected to being screamed out. She belonged to a pre-war vintage—a deep-chested, deep-sterned mother of men. She couldn't scream, but she had a fruity boom. She turned it on.

“Your father talks great nonsense, Dolly. Even for a vicar. No one who has so little to do, and doesn't do so much of it, *could* be perfectly balanced. However, his nonsense has done one good thing. My maids are all afraid to go out after dark. I see quite a lot of them in the evenings now.”

The brown girl (the vicar's fourth daughter) thus challenged, fixed Mrs. Clarridge with a gay, shrill smile, and fastened her claws in her blithely. Gore moved over to Ingoldsby's other flank. “You're stationed at the Depot, Ingoldsby?” and so on for a while. The amateur Captain presented an unbroken surface of amiable earnestness and anxiety to be a plain soldier. Evidently a “frills” complex held his soul in uneasiness—perhaps a little more acute in contact with a pukkha Colonel.

But no one could be nicer to anxieties of that sort than Wyck Gore. When he rose to go, Ingoldsby rose with him. He had most kindly volunteered to drive the injured shoulder home in his fire-work.

The Gorilla Canon had possession of Lady Ireland: “Eteese along,” he was saying, “sin swe have had blood in our brains. Sby *blood* I mee niblood——” But she found time to be a little cold in accepting young Ingoldsby's eagerness to carry home a brother warrior. Ingoldsby was rather absorbed in the road ahead of him during the brief journey.

Before they left the Castle, Gore strolled round to the hinterland where the dynamo purred. The electrician, a smart, capable-looking Londoner, was

much interested by the New Gentleman's appearance. The dramatic failure of the telephone connecting the agent's house with the Castle had been due simply to the fact that, three days before the failure, he had begun the overhaul of the Castle instrument concerned, because Mr. Burchall had complained of it before he had moved over to The Warren. The engine had begun to be troublesome later that same afternoon. He had deserted the telephone instrument, which was not likely to be wanted at the moment, and had stupidly not remembered it.

"Very sorry, sir. I can't think how I forgot to put the wire right."

"And the lights?" Gore asked. "Had you been overhauling the lighting-cable also?"

The man rubbed the extreme point of his nose with the one tiny area of cleanliness left upon the back of his hand.

"No, sir. That's a teaser, that is. That has me beat. Nothing wrong this end, that's certain, sir. Nor there was nothing wrong at your end, neither. It has me fair beat, that has. Unless someone was playing tricks."

"You were on duty here that night, between nine and ten?"

"Yes. But not actually in here, sir, in the powerhouse. I'm not expected to be here all the time, so long as everything's going on all right. I look in from time to time."

"Where are your own quarters?"

"Over there across the yard, sir—through the arch . . . you may have noticed?"

"Any visitors there that night?"

"No one, sir—except Beechinor, from the office. Mr. Theobald sent him up to me for a couple of new bulbs"

"What time was that?"

"Getting on for ten, sir."

"Where were you—here—or in your quarters?"

"In my own quarters, sir. But I came over to the stores-room with him. That's just off the power-house."

"Anyone could have entered the power-house, during your absence?"

"Well, sir, of course it never entered anyone's head that anyone would be up to any mischief."

"Anyone who knew how could have cut out my lights at this end?"

"Oh yes, of course, sir—anyone who knew how——"

"I'm making no accusation against Beechinor, nor against you. But I'm getting to the bottom of this, sometime. Does Beechinor know enough to select the right switch for my lights?"

The electrician considered. "Well, yes, sir. I suppose he does. It's on the board, plain for anyone to see."

"Quite. You're absolutely sure that you didn't cut me off in error?"

The man was palpably a punctiliously honest and careful creature. His "No, sir," was wounded.

Beechinor had a curious knack of turning up. . . .

Mr. Stairs, Theobald's assistant at the estate office, roared into the yard on a mud-daubed motor-cycle. Goggled, overalled, gauntleted and muffled, not a lot of him was to be seen in the beam of his headlight. He, too, was much interested by a first encounter with the New Gentleman. "You've been asking Lundy about the lights, I expect, sir? We can't understand it. Nothing wrong was noticed at this end. There *was* nothing wrong . . . except that your lights went out for a bit. They were on when Beechinor found you."

But Beechinor, Gore had been informed . . . by Theobald . . . had not found him until nearly half-past ten—having heard the shot fired at ten, according to his guess. This time-table, unhappily, remained uncorroborated. However, the New Gentleman was plainly not one who troubled himself about little things much.

"I wish you'd get my ceiling right, Mr. Stairs," he smiled.

But that had already been attended to—that afternoon, during his absence. The job, Mr. Stairs hoped, was probably finished now ; he was on his way to make certain that it had been well and truly done. His motor-cycle followed Ingoldsby's firework round by the upper road to the agent's house.

Ingoldsby, who had accepted an invitation to smoke a pipe, had recovered his conversational powers. He turned to look at the approaching eye of Stairs' machine, as he got out of the car behind Gore.

"Run into old Theobald yet, sir ?"

"Oh yes, yes."

"Good man gone wrong, I'm afraid. Awful pity. He won't last another year, they say, if he doesn't pull up."

"So bad as that ?"

"Yes. Pretty hopeless. He's afraid to look you in the face now."

Gore nodded regretfully. He, too, had noticed that weakness . . . or prudence.

"The poor old devil hasn't shown up at the Castle for months and months, you know. Won't face Lady Ireland—I expect that's the fact of the matter. Anyhow she hasn't set eyes on him for over six months, I believe. Stairs is always sent up to see her when she's got to be seen, or when there's anything to be looked to round the house. Dash silly of the old chap, of course. I mean, she has been frightfully good to the

poor old beggar. And she's quite fond of him really . . . known him for donkey's years and all that. But, once a chap gets started down *that hill*——"

Ingoldsby was very solemn and wise, and Gore nodded again in sympathy. Stairs appeared then in the doorway, hovering respectfully. He had taken off his goggles, and revealed himself as a keen, brown-skinned, good-looking, dark man of about forty, very much on the spot. He reported that the ceiling had been repaired, that it would show a bit, but would dry out pretty well in due course.

"I have another little job for you, Mr. Stairs," Gore said, "one day next week. You've mended a hole for me. I want you to make one for me. I'll have a chat with Mr. Theobald about it."

Mr. Stairs was a person prepared to knock a hole in the bottom of heaven if it was his job. He said that he would mention it to Mr. Theobald, and went off into the darkness of the short-cut on his big Norton, dangerously.

Ingoldsby stayed for nearly an hour, and drank two little whiskies and talked about what had happened to him in the Great War. But, with extraordinary stupidity . . . or intelligence . . . he refused to be induced to speak of Sir William Ireland's death. Time after time he was led up to it. But each time he shied back into the welter of How—He—Had—Hated—Having—To—Go—Over—The—Top—The—Second—Time. He would have liked to chance a third little whisky, but was clearly doubtful of its effect upon the steering of the firework.

However, he accepted with alacrity an invitation to kill pheasants, and went away plainly feeling that, for an amateur, he had kept his end up pretty well.

Gore went up by train to Waterley that evening.

S.-C.M.

o

At Shenstone Station his ticket was punched by Thomas Pilker. Thomas Pilker was the new kind of railway porter—intellectual and prone to General Strikes. He didn't want to give information about trains, the weather—or anything else—to anyone. He wore a red tie, preferred quadrasyllables with not too precise meanings, and had an eye that was only biding its time. But otherwise he was a respectable, decent young fellow enough, merely in need of soap and water and kicking, mental and physical.

Gannett, his colleague, was a pale, harmless, willing lad, who—as it happened—had at the moment three fingers oozing greater or smaller quantities of blood. The condition appeared normal with him. It was nothing, he said, just a scrape from a crate-nail. He had no pocket-handkerchief—or, if he had, was reserving it for some need more special than that of a nose. A word from the red, gaunt-jawed Pilker set him running about like a dervish-mouse.

The stationmaster—strange fate—was a V.C. of Neuve Chapelle—one of the meekest and quietest lambs of men Gore had ever met. He pointed with pride to the roses which still decorated the platform wall gaily. The mere mention of the 7.15 p.m. down—then not so far off from arrival, as a matter of fact—added, however, ten years to his face. When the New Gentleman from the Castle asked further whether a slip-carriage was still added on to it at Waterley, he said, "Itt tiz, sir," solemnly, and retired into his office. Gore went and walked round the waiting-room until it was time to cross the bridge to the up-platform for his train. Waiting-rooms are not bracing apartments; but he was interested rather in this one.

At his request Inspector Kaye turned out a flying squad and found Boobyear, the permanent way man

enjoying his pint in the Good Intent, by the pungent riverside. But Boobyear didn't want to talk about the night he hadn't felt well, twelve months back. He knew, however, what was going to win the three o'clock race next day.

There was one more face to see—one more mouth and other orifices and projections and appendages to look at. After a very brief search in the still semi-dismantled study of the agent's house, Gore came upon a little stack of pictures and framed photographs clearly weeded out and left behind by Burchall as best left behind. Amongst them was a large signed portrait of Burchall's stepfather. Gore set it upon a chair, and sat down astride another and blew tobacco-smoke at it for a while.

That, then, was William Ireland—a man good enough to make his millions where poorer courages and cunningings could barely find existence—a man strong enough, dangerous enough . . . or evil enough . . . to be killed —(which ?)—while weaker, more cowardly, more godly spirits were allowed to live. It was in his face—as it is nearly always in such men's faces. Ruthless will, a low brain-power that offered no complications to a high instinct for peddling and outwitting—the criminal's ear—the glitter behind the astute, eagle-lidded eyes, seen so often in that peculiar hyper-development of the male instinct which covers itself up beneath a sanctimonious propriety. All the force of the face was in the eyes and the corners of the mouth. The rest was fat and flabbiness—a face of sixty, a life of seventy.

And so the pieces of the puzzle lay still higgledy-piggledy—a little more dangerous to disturb now than they had been . . . by a probably fatal first mismove. Gore had walked all round his puzzle—and arrived at

the place from which he had set out. Every facet of the crystal in turn had tempted a blow for the hidden truth ; every one in turn had promised a disastrous blunder.

Well—he had made his first round, seen, at any rate, the protagonists of the tragedy step out from between the covers of R 10693 / 78 X, and take flesh and blood and actuality to themselves. . . . Or, as nearly actuality as, respectively, each found convenient. Not much result . . . except a shoulder. No wonder Inspector Kaye was a little jaded and languid. . . .

However, one would walk round again, and look, perhaps, a little more closely at those actualities.

10

For some years, now, Wyck Gore had taken pains to remind himself at frequent intervals that he was not decaying into a cynic. But he retained, alas, some marks of the beast and spots of the leopard. And one of them was a conviction that, where it was necessary to look for one woman, one always found two.

Now, while the red-blooded Gannett and the red-necktie Pilker had been under inspection, the tail of Gore's eye had perceived, half in and half out of a lighted window of the stationmaster's quarters over the offices, a henna-haired, ruby-lipped young woman with two very bold black eyes. This houri, he divined, was the fickle Phœbe Carr, the stationmaster's niece. Next morning, accordingly, he entrusted to Stephens a commission which that discreet individual (already a favourite in the tap of the Arms) executed within a couple of hours.

"I see that 'ere young person, sir. Very fly, sir. A 'ot lot—as far as it goes. 'Er great pal at this present

moment bein' one of our keepers" (Stephens had taken possession of the entire estate with the aplomb of the old Army) "by the name of Rutley. An' 'er best worst friend is a young person named Millie Binner, employed in the post office—Millie Binner havin' been all right with this 'ere Rutley until this 'ere Phoebe Carr got 'old of him. So I dropped into the post office, sir, on my way home, and I had a word or two with Miss Binner, an' a very nice, quiet young person she is, sir. The information that you wanted bein' delicate in a manner of speakin', sir, I 'ad to send off a telegram to myself at headquarters, sir. That was one shilling, sir."

Gore handed over that sum.

"Thank you, sir. In the course of that, sir, I ascertained that this 'ere Phoebe Carr is supposed to look after her uncle's place an' 'elp in doin' up the rooms in the station, bein' employed by the Company to do it at eighteen an' sixpence a week. But bein' a lazy, naturally dirty young person, an' spendin' all her time on her face, she never does a hand's turn if she can help it. An' any'ow, next month she's goin' into service up at a house up here above us, sir—a Hadmiral Addon's, sir."

"Thank you very much, Stephens, indeed. How's the swipes at the Arms? Pretty decent, eh?"

"The swipes, sir," replied Stephens with decision, "is all right."

There was no mystery behind this duologue. The brown paper covering which had contained Hopgood's penknife had disappeared—over twelve months ago—in a large, papery world. The last alleged thing known of it was that Lady Ireland had picked it up from the seat facing her husband's in the compartment in which she had found him murdered. What had become of it after that?

The possible replies were numerous ; but Gore had weighed most of them very carefully. In the end he had decided that the first piece of the puzzle upon which a finger was to be risked was the silk-shinned, blue-faced Phoebe Carr.

On two successive days he and Stephens arrived outside the station at 1.16, to inquire whether a case from the J.A. and N. Co-operative Society had arrived for him. On both days Gannett, the Sanguinary, was in sole charge of the deserted, mist-blanketed platform. But on the third day he had decided, it seemed, to risk going home to his dinner before Pilker's return. Stephens got out of the car and posted himself strategically before a poster representing a gay bottle of Worthington. Gore dived into the dingy, fusty little waiting-room which had aroused his interest a couple of days before.

A glance at the grate confirmed the opinion of Miss Phoebe Carr's best worst friend. Perhaps a hearth-brush had been whisked across the dull blackleading once or twice. But certainly the contents of the fire-place had not been disturbed for many months. Filled with hope, Gore advanced to take a closer view. After all, in a small country station on a branch line where three trains stopped a day in winter, why should a waiting-room fire be lighted ? At any rate none had been lighted that winter. That was certain. On top of the lower strata of dusty coal, damp paper and blackened sticks lay a deposit of cigarette packets, matches and banana skins, indicating the sweepings of the dark, little room for a protracted period.

In less than a moment, he had removed the two upper strata, and was loosening the third and lowest. He uttered a little chuckle of gladness. Damp, crushed, grimy and ill-odorous, he drew out a folded piece of fine, bronze-brown paper. A glance showed the hurried inscription—"Hopgood." On the inner side was Morny's

neat label, addressed to Lady Ireland, Shenstone Castle. Shenstone postmark, October 28th, of the preceding year. Rapidly Gore replaced the contents of the grate, and bore his prize away without obstacle.

A longish shot, but, after all, not an absolute fluke. For, if Lady Ireland had the covering of brown paper (*not* the string) in her hand when she had looked into her husband's face and made that dreadful discovery—what then?

She had rushed out of the compartment into Ingoldsby's arms. The string had been left behind in the compartment (it had been found at the side of the compartment away from where she stood, at the corridor side. *She* had not dropped or thrown it there).

But, meeting Ingoldsby, fainting, she had let the brown paper cover slip from her hands.

He had stooped, picked it up—supposing it some property of hers—and rammed it into a pocket. After that he had been busy with her and with the horror of the discovery, and had forgotten all about it.

This—*if* Ingoldsby and Lady Ireland had spoken the truth. Always *if*—

Now, he and she had waited in the waiting-room until she was well enough to go away—after such questioning as the police had ventured in view of her condition. During that interrogation, Ingoldsby had remained—alone—in the waiting-room. He had been irritated by the stationmaster's officiousness—worked up on Lady Ireland's account—worried to death by finding himself mixed up in such an affair. He had scarcely known what he was doing. He had walked about in the musty little room, cursing his luck. No doubt his hands had found the alien piece of brown paper in his pocket. He had taken it out and tossed it into the empty grate or half-empty grate. (For Gore's little theory had rested on the hope that the

fireplace was attended to, at most, once a year or so.) No one had thought of looking for it there. He himself had no idea that he had thrown it into the fireplace. And presently, say twelve weeks later, Miss Phoebe Carr had had a fit of energy and covered up the rubbish in the grate with clean newspapers and four chunks of slaty coal. At intervals after that the stratum of banana skins, matches and cigarette packets had been piled on.

That had been the theory—supposing that *if*—Not so long a shot, after all.

He motored to Westpool forthwith, and went up to London that afternoon by a fast train. At a little after five he was endeavouring to persuade Mr. Cavendish to let him have enlarged copies of the set of fingerprints belonging to the case. He did not say precisely why. Mr. Cavendish was extremely unwilling to comply with his request, and gave way only upon the delivery of an ultimatum.

"If I'm to be of any use to you," said Gore, "it will only be because I do what I want to do in the way I want to do it. I won't do it any other way. I've not got enough time in stock to waste any."

He got his prints and, an hour later, rewarded Mr. Cavendish's repentance by a hint, over the 'phone, when the brown paper cover had been subjected to some careful treatment at Rye House.

"One print missing from your set," he reported. "However, it's all right. I've got it. Only want a name for it now."

There was a long pause.

"Oh!" Mr. Cavendish's voice. "Any ideas on the subject?"

"Quite a lot," Gore replied brightly. "Good-bye. I've nine minutes to get to Paddington. I'll send you back your prints."

"I wish——" began Mr. Cavendish.
But no one heard what came after that.

What Gore had decided to keep to himself for the moment was the fact that the thumb which had left two pretty perfect superimposed prints upon the brown paper cover—made over (more or less) perfect prints of some unknown persons—was Ingoldsby's. Further, there was a very clear, unidentifiable thumb mark, which had been partially cancelled by one of Ingoldsby's, but was otherwise the most distinct trace left on the covering. No print amongst Mr. Cavendish's specimens at all resembling it had revealed itself under the microscope at Rye House. In one place was a coaly smudge, probably a souvenir of Phœbe Carr.

But there was no doubt whatever about Ingoldsby's thumb. The packet had been in Ingoldsby's ungloved right hand, passed by it from Lady Ireland's gloved hands to the waiting-room fireplace, probably *via* his overcoat pocket.

Theobald . . . had worn gloves, too, then.

The fingers that had made those deep depressions had been gloved or protected by a handkerchief——

However, Ingoldsby was, probably, the first bit of the puzzle to be picked out of the higgledy-piggledy.

Just how ?

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II

In the splendid days, gone now, alas ! beyond recall, when Wyck Gore had been the most wily and determined No. 1 in the Service, he had also played in that position from time to time for that memorable galaxy of talent known as the Cheetahs.

Now at St. Winnister, four miles from Shenstone, were the headquarters and the very fine ground of the West Westshire Polo Club. And the Secretary to that perhaps a little too exclusive institution was, as it happened, a gentleman named Freeman, who, in those happier days, had been for a while the Cheetahs' goal.

The special interest of this fact—ascertained by a glance at a fixture-card left behind in Burchall's study—was that Ingoldsby was extremely keen to be elected a playing member of the Club while stationed at Waterley. That, as has been said, was not a simple matter. His chance of election, as it stood, Gore estimated, was about fifty to one-fiftieth of one.

But a hint that the Secretary's interest might possibly be aroused would cheer up the Amateur Captain greatly, without doubt. And eventually, perhaps, something might be arranged for him, if he wasn't, on trial, an absolute dud.

Ingoldsby came down to St. Winnister with a couple of very useful ponies and made quite a decent show in a practice match one afternoon in the following week. He was very pleased, because everyone was very nice to him afterwards, and almost tearfully grateful to Gore. Gore, who had driven over to watch the match, drove him back to Shenstone, when the ponies were safely railed home. After some negotiations with the Adjutant over the 'phone, he found it possible, to his great pleasure, to accept an invitation to stay and dine.

In the course of a really excellent little dinner he expanded like a flower in a slow-motion film. He related some more Things That Had Happened Him in The Great War. At half-past nine, when the prospect of having to turn out of bachelor comfort to drive fourteen miles to barracks through a foggy November night was beginning to grow extremely unattractive,

he raised his eyes by chance to the mantelpiece of his host's sitting-room. For Gore had decided that he was a young man likely to yield most satisfactory results beneath shock treatment. Unkind—but business is business.

The flushed and bright-eyed happiness with which the afternoon—and the evening—had irradiated the Amateur Captain was wiped instantly from his face as by a dingy sponge. Anxious dismay, sallow and drab, was left. His eyes dulled, his eyebrows went together in a frown, his lips parted and showed the helpless tip of a too pink tongue. He leaned forward in his arm-chair to stare more fiercely. Then he remembered that he was not alone and sat back and stared from behind a hand applied to his temple. Gore was quite sorry for him. Seldom had he seen a skeleton break up a feast so rapidly or so devastatingly.

He caught Ingoldsby's eyes and held them firmly with his own.

"That clock is ten minutes fast, my dear chap."

But, as he was aware, the face of the clock was not visible to Ingoldsby, for the reason that against it rested a piece of brown paper, folded loosely to make a small cover, smudged here and there with soot.

It was too much for the guest's self-control. He hoisted himself out of his chair. "Forgive me——" He thrust his frown close to the thing that had confounded him. He turned to Gore. "Where . . . where on earth did that come from, sir?"

"That?" His host's airiness was a thing of beauty. "What? Oh . . . that old bit of paper. . . . Why?"

"Well . . ." Ingoldsby hesitated. "Well, the fact is . . . perhaps you know. . . . I mean . . . isn't that the brown paper there was all the fuss about, sir?" He stared again. "Yes. It *is*. I *know* it is." He waited. "Isn't it?" he asked at length.

"You've seen it before?"

"Good God! I should rather think I have," exclaimed the guest unhappily. "Where did you come across it, sir?" Suspicion hardened his face. "Was it left behind here by Burchall? By Jove——!"

Gore left that supposition undealt with . . . for the moment.

"He did leave a lot of rubbish. I wish to Heaven he hadn't. What's the trouble, old chap? You look worried. The whisky's behind you—and you outrode one of the best No. 2's in England this afternoon. Think of that."

But Ingoldsby could not be happy again that night. He had another whisky, and told why.

It seemed that he had remembered distinctly, all through having had that beastly piece of brown paper in his hand in the carriage—after Lady Ireland had found Sir William dead. But for the life of him he hadn't been able to remember whether he had given it back to Lady Ireland, when he had picked it up, or not. So he had stated at his examination that he had *not* seen it. Awfully silly of him. . . . But—— (The appeal of his eyes, his anxiety to believe that his elder knew all about his respectful and quite hopeless adoration for Lady Ireland, was pathetic. He did not consider it necessary to explain to a man of the world like Wyck Gore that, to save Lady Ireland from . . . inconvenience . . . or anything else (undefined) which could cause her annoyance, he was prepared to lie like any Ananias.)

He sucked an empty pipe and guzzled his very weak whisky dejectedly and descended into darker and darker depths of self-reproach. Rotten thing for a chap in the Service—and so forth. . . .

"I suppose, sir, you read the newspaper reports of the case?"

"Some of them. Can't say I recall you as having figured very prominently. They worried you about a return ticket, didn't they?"

The Amateur Captain recalled bitterly for a little while how he had been worried. His face twitched. His breath became puffy. He reached explosion point suddenly.

"As a matter of fact, sir," he blurted out, "I don't know what you'll think of me—but I lied like the deuce about that damned ticket, too."

"My dear chap——" The pukkha Colonel was really a bit regretful—almost reproachful.

"Yes. You see, I told the police that I had bought a return from Waterley to North Pier and back. I hadn't. I had bought a return from Waterley to *Shenstone*. You see, I knew *she* was almost certain to go back by that train. I thought there might be a chance of seeing her, if the slip-carriage wasn't crowded, and old Ireland was asleep. Awful asinine of me. But, my God, sir . . . I *feel*—you understand . . . why I always wanted to see her . . . even for a few moments. You've *seen* her—you can understand, I know."

"I hadn't meant to go down to Shenstone, really. I just got a ticket . . . well, in case . . . in case I *could* go down. Well . . . when she came up to my compartment . . . of course, I *went* down to Shenstone. Then . . . when we found out that the old man was done for . . . I was in a nice stew. Because everyone would want to know why I had been going down to Shenstone that night. I had nothing to bring me down there, except to go to the Castle. And there was no one at the Castle. . . . You see how it was, sir?"

"I see."

"And then I had the most extraordinary ill-luck—the most . . . well, really, the most extraordinary

bad luck. How it happened, I can't tell you. But I went along to Sir William's compartment, and there, in the corridor, outside his compartment, I saw a half-ticket lying just outside the door. I thought it must be mine. I had jumped up into the carriage, and I knew that I had divided my return ticket into halves. I always do. So I picked the damn thing up and stuck it into my pocket. I was sure I must have managed to drop it somehow, getting up into the carriage from the ground.

"Then, of course, when we found out about Sir William . . . the thing went clean out of my head. So when the porter fellow at Shenstone asked for my ticket, I just stuck my hands into my pockets and pulled out the first ticket I found there. And, of course, that was the wrong one . . . I mean, the one I had picked up. It was the To-half of a return between Waterley and Shenstone, all right . . . but not punched. Of course I didn't notice that. But that night, when I got back to barracks, I turned out my other pockets, and found . . . what? The two halves of the ticket *I* had bought. I saw then what had happened. But, as I had told the police that I had bought a Waterley-North Pier return, I couldn't go to them and say, 'I told you a lie. I bought a Waterley-Shenstone return, really. It was someone else's ticket which I picked up in the carriage and gave up at Shenstone—the one that wasn't punched at Waterley.' I couldn't quite bring myself to do that. I funk'd it. I . . . I know you can guess why, sir. . . ."

Gore's business was not the distribution of sympathy. This young donkey had done one of the foolish, sentimental things which young donkeys do, and always will do for women. He had got rattled in a nastyish corner, and he had paid the usual penalty for it—ended up with a worse funk than the one he had wriggled out

of. Meanwhile—another usual result—his bad bit of luck probably meant a good bit for someone else. In this case—Gore & Tolley & Co.

"I presume you got rid of your own ticket on the spot——?"

"Well . . . no, sir."

"Oh?"

"I was uneasy about it—about the other ticket. I thought it better to hang on to my own—in case anything turned up. You see—well, hang it, *someone* dropped that other ticket there—after I got into the carriage. Who the deuce *was* it?"

"You've absolutely no idea, Ingoldsby?"

Something new in the tone of his host's voice attracted the guest's attention—something not quite genial. He took some little time to reply "None." And he was puzzled when the same tone suggested that when he got home that night he should drop Gore a line enclosing the ticket he had there. But, in his puzzlement, his hand had begun a move towards an inner pocket, and he did not care to stop the movement. He produced the two halves of a Waterley-Shenstone return ticket from a wallet—the To half duly punched—and Gore took them and, after a glance, put them away in his own wallet.

"I'm going to keep these for you, Ingoldsby. You'll be happier without them."

The guest's face changed swiftly at that. The scud of succeeding suspicions chased across his face. To do him credit, he became, in that tight corner, a dangerous-looking fighter—certainly no funk, though he was afraid of this sudden development. But since he had been three years of age or thereabouts men had seen in Wyck Gore's face two things—the first, that he was a winner, and the second, that, in his determination to win, he was merciless.

Ingoldsby looked—or tried to look—at a pair of agate-grey eyes—his own eyes slid away.

“ You’ve laid a trap for me—a damned trap——”

“ I offer you a piece of advice, to make up for it, Ingoldsby,” replied his host pitilessly. “ Keep your mouth shut longer and oftener. And don’t worry about Lady Ireland. Believe me, if she’s worrying about you, she’s only wondering what silly thing you’re going to do next. Now, look here—you *know* who dropped that other ticket. Who was it ? ”

Ingoldsby looked a last time into the elder man’s relentless eyes. He made a grimace intended to be defiant and contemptuous. As it was a failure, he strode out, found his car, and disappeared into the night.

Alas for the glory of the day——

A moment informed Gore that the unpunched first-class half-return ticket found and given up by the Amateur Captain had been purchased—by one number—before the ticket which he had so unwisely “ hung on to.” The former was No. 776541 K. The latter No. 776542 K (one number later). Naturally, the number of first-class tickets by such a train would have been extremely limited.

Another moment, however, informed him that in *time*, the separation between the two was considerably greater. For the clerk on duty in the booking-office at Waterley at the time had informed the police, before the inquest, that, while only four first-class returns to Shenstone and back had been issued by him for the 7.15, one of them had been issued nearly half an hour before the other three, while the office was open for the sale of tickets for the Plymouth train. The owner of unpunched No. 776541 K, therefore, had bought it at 6.30–6.35 or thereabouts. He had not passed on to the platform with it ; for, in that case, it would have

been punched. He had gone somewhere else with it—and it had disappeared until Ingoldsby had found it—in the slip-carriage. Ingoldsby had got into the slip-carriage, say, at 6.59 or 7. Therefore the owner of the unpunched ticket had got in, at earliest, at 7.1 p.m.—since Ingoldsby had not seen the ticket lying in the corridor when he had got in. From 6.35 to 7.1, then, the purchaser of the unpunched ticket had it in his possession. It had taken him half an hour to get from the booking-office to the slip-carriage. He had not gone by the platform. How, then, had he gone—and why that way—and (this piece of the puzzle must be touched next, very carefully) who was he?

Ingoldsby had either seen him—or knew who he was—that was certain. If he had seen—whom had he seen? If *someone else* had seen, who—and when? And why, in either case, had no whisper of him been breathed by either Ingoldsby or the only other two people who could have breathed it—Lady Ireland or Theobald? There could, of course, be only one intelligent answer to that question—The purchaser of the unpunched ticket had been Burchall.

Burchall, on his way back to Shenstone from Westpool in his powerful Sunbeam, had bought a first return ticket between Waterley and Shenstone at the booking-office at or about 6.35. He had got back into his car, driven it round to that out-of-the-way spot along fog-wreathed Tip and Run Lane, made his way up on to the embankment, to — the man whose wife he coveted, whose money he coveted and had lost. He had climbed up into the carriage—Who had seen him—? When?

Gore's finger hovered over the tempting piece musingly—touched it—and left it precisely where it had been.

When Ingoldsby had seen the brown paper cover, he

S.-C.M.

P

had said, "Burchall left it behind, I suppose." Now that was a curious thing for him to have said.

It would be interesting to see if that piece would move itself. And any others.

12

For two days nothing stirred. Gore put in a couple of hours down at the estate office on each morning, absorbing information in tabloid form as to details of income and expenditure. Not from Theobald. Theobald's ankle was giving him trouble; no footwear made in England would go on the injured foot. He appeared the second morning for a quarter of an hour in a dressing-gown, and sat by the fire silently while Gore and Stairs and the two clerks rushed devouringly through ledgers and files. Then he drifted away to his own quarters again.

But everything was in apple-pie order. Not an invoice was out of place. Stairs and his subordinates—three extremely wide-awake and efficient young men—were perhaps a little complacent about the office "system." But, without reserves, they admitted the "system" as Theobald's, and stood in a kind of affectionate terror of his towering height, his powerful voice, his genially scaring blasphemy, and his encyclopædic knowledge of the work. Now Stairs was not a man to be easily impressed or enlisted by an enthusiasm. Theobald knew his job from A to Z.

Why, then, all that fuss about dismissing him? Certainly he drank and, occasionally, did the foolish things more or less drunken men do, even nowadays. Certainly he was too fond of his dressing-gown and his slippers of mornings, and the Shenstone Arms of evenings. But you couldn't mistake the man for a moment for

anything but what he was (if Sir William had valued that asset), and you couldn't have bought a better agent for ten times the money——

Now, why that fuss—that passionate, ugly, most unfortunate fuss——?

"I suppose," Gore asked, "You didn't see a lot of Mr. Burchall here?"

Stair's eyes twinkled. "Not a lot. Mr. Burchall is an impressionist. Mr. Theobald expects two and two to make four *every* time. Mr. Burchall found it simpler to devote himself to the social side. On the social side he is very strong. Impressionism is in request socially just at present."

An intelligent, useful sort of chap, Stairs. He had been in China and Mexico and Kenya, and most of the places where the rolling stones of the world rattle through on their round. Also in Tibet. Gore chatted about Tibet with him for quite a long time, after the two clerks had gone away to lunch. But the talk drifted back to Theobald. The office had its chief and his system on the brain a little.

The idyll of the Colonel and the district nurse fell out, as all idylls should, of a bright morning and without dull warning.

Country district nurses, as everyone knows, are thirty-nine, nine stone, and internally corrupted by petty gluttony. The Shenstone one wasn't. She was fifty-two: she weighed five stone something: she lived on soda-water and the novels of Mr. E. V. Lucas, and walked, or rather blew, along, as if her diet had imparted to her a buoyancy that needed but a joy-stick to fly.

She had a quick, bright little eye like a little dormouse's, and it had rested approvingly on the grey-eyed Colonel while his shoulder had been under her excellent care. And so, when, blowing athwart the

landscape of the park that fine frosty morning airily, she encountered him returning from a before-breakfast gallop on the moor, she paused archly, to make inquiries as to his convalescence—now unnursed. She spoke of many things, patting the Colonel's mount affectionately; and, as her prattling lips did not come to the level of the Colonel's knee, he was compelled to bend to her picturesquely in order to hear what she was saying. Had any witness come along the bridle path beneath the pines, it must have seemed that a conversation of a very intimate and earnest kind was in progress. That was precisely what did happen. Lady Ireland came round the bend of the turfy drive abruptly: and Dudley Burchall came with her: and their arms were intertwined and their faces were turned to one another rapturously in the sunlight that was just beginning to break through the November morning mist. The sunlight clothed their enlacement with borders of warm, pale gold. Gore had never seen a lovelier lady more sweetly invaded by a finer young man's homage.

Gore was looking towards this apparition: the district nurse's back, fortunately, was towards it. "There are too many babies brought into this wicked world, Nurse," he said severely. "It's you, with your cap and bib, and Dr. Maudesley with his little black bag, who give us our Great Wars and our Labour troubles and our deserted fields." The coast was clear; the interlaced figures had turned about and gone back the way they had come. Gore beamed upon the district nurse and gathered up his reins.

Nurse Lydon gazed upon him with demure admiration. She thought of something to detain him a moment longer. "Have you heard that Miss Copeland had another of her attacks last night——?"

"I'm sorry to hear that."

"Yes. She very nearly went. Dr. Maudesley was

with her until five o'clock this morning. I met him just now going home to his breakfast. Poor man, he had two cases away out at Black Hill to go to when he had done with Miss Copeland. He's awfully worried about her. He says he can't understand her attacks at all. She tells him that she never had anything the least like them until she came to stay at the Castle in May. She calls them just bilious attacks. But he says there must be something seriously wrong. Poor thing. Such a sweetly pretty girl—with such happiness otherwise—such good luck. Have you heard if the date of the marriage is actually fixed? Early in January, I hear. Well, I must run on. Take care of that shoulder, Colonel, won't you? Good-morning."

She blew away like a wisp of thistledown along one aisle of pines. The Colonel rode musingly down another.

Thank the Lord her little tireless tongue had been busy at that moment.

A stir——

Steady, now.

What did that pretty, light-framed picture mean?

Gore always did well at breakfast-time. Never had the fragrance of coffee and bacon and eggs and toast been more appetising and more delicious than on that frosty, sunlit morning. Never had milk been so creamy, the sausages crisper, the eggs more golden, the fire that lit the bright equipage of the breakfast-table jollier or more comforting. But he saw nothing of this pleasant still life. That other picture blotted out all else from his eyes until many pipes had been smoked and breakfast altogether forgotten.

A little after eleven he reached the estate office. Theobald, grey as a badger this morning, and scared as a gander with a hawk over his cackling ladies, was

busy, in dressing-gown and bandage, with a Waterley architect. He had been at the whisky decanter already ; the big, airy offices were full of it. But he knew a great deal more about building labourers' cottages than the architect did, none the less.

He didn't want to see Gore, and Gore didn't want to see him. Gore got what he wanted in a moment from Stairs.

"There's something wrong with that new larder we put in for Dr. Maudesley, isn't there, Mr. Stairs ? You mentioned it yesterday."

"I saw it this morning, sir. His housekeeper says she must have a through draught. There is quite enough draught. We can't give her more, with two windows opening north, unless we put the door back where we've just taken it away from."

"She asked us to shift it ?"

"Yes. I don't expect Mr. Theobald will want to spend any more money on it. Perhaps you'd like to go up the road and look at it, sir."

They went and saw the larder, and the business of seeing it lasted until Dr. Maudesley came in from his first morning round. Stairs went back to the office gratified that he had been upheld. The doctor, delighted to hear about the Colonel's shoulder's good behaviour, while he swallowed his mid-morning cup of broth, told him in return all about his wakeful night. Poor Miss Copeland had been seized by this last—and, so far, worst—attack about one o'clock in the morning. The little, hairy-handed, sturdy medico had put in five anxious hours with her. He had just been back to the Castle now, and found his patient, to his relief, sleeping quietly enough, if very weak.

His scalding broth went down into his chilled body in gulps of comfort. "I shall have to ask for a consultation," he said, "if there is a recurrence. I don't

want to appear an alarmist, and I really know nothing of her family history. But, as she is Lady Ireland's intimate friend—and Mr. Burchall's fiancée—— By Jove, it *was* icy this morning at six. Wished I had had some of this stuff waiting for me when I got home.

"Yes. I'm anxious about Miss Copeland. I should prefer *not* to suggest a consultation, of course. But this is the seventh attack she has had in five months—the fourth serious attack. The attacks are increasing in severity. I suppose I had better ask for a consultation. Eh? What, Colonel?"

"Biliousness?" the Colonel asked politely.

"*She* says so. *I* don't. *I* say chronic ulceration of the stomach and possibly of the liver—— Of course, possibly something even more serious. Cancer. But you can understand—I'm not introducing that word in a hurry. The poor girl is frightened to death as it is. Perhaps I *had* better have a consultation. The vomiting had recurred at intervals between six o'clock, when I left, and ten. That is—nine hours. She brings up everything."

He eyed the last mouthful of his soup greedily. He held his cup clasped between two sets of little, hairy, thick fingers. The little man had fought his way up from his father's shop or trade, without doubt; pride and happiness in his achievement were written plainly on his honest, simple face. He didn't want a consultation. He wanted to pull this young lady up at the Castle round unaided. He was puzzled by her illnesses—alarmed by this latest of them—but still disposed to go on with what he guessed was wrong.

The broth was finished. He put down his cup in the saucer with a sigh, and lighted a cigarette, inhaling violently.

"Never had anything of the sort until about six months ago. That's the curious thing. Until, in

fact, she came to stay down here. So she says. But, of course, one can't rely upon *that*— Girls say things—or *won't* say them to a doctor. It's a business— Of course, if anything happened—"

He sought for counsel from the Colonel's grave, friendly silence. The Colonel appeared willing to lend all reasonable sympathy and interest to his anxiety. "Seven attacks?" mused the Colonel. "They always come on suddenly?"

The doctor clicked a thumb and a forefinger noisily. "Like that," he said. "She's quite well in between—eats normally, sleeps, gads about, behaves like a rational human being. But she's the nibbling type. Always nibbling at something—chocolates and rubbish—little cakes—a cocktail if she's too warm or too chilly or too hungry to wait for a meal, or too stuffy to be able to face one. What *can* they expect, these girls—"

"If I *had* a consultation, I should have a first-class man, of course—Poulton or Sir Kenneth Cameron—Cameron, I expect. But I hope it won't be necessary. So my larder is all a larder should be, eh? Well, I'll take your word for it. You a bridge-player? Any night you feel like it—you're on the telephone, aren't you? Good-bye, Colonel. Wish you'd give me a light over my gates. Good-bye."

Gore walked home rapidly—for he was, by mischance, on foot—across the park. That extraordinary picture of the early morning had by now blotted out all others.

Eight o'clock, it had been, practically to the minute, when he had got back from his ride. It could have been no more than a quarter to eight when those two interlaced figures had come round the corner of the path, gazing into one another's eyes. At six o'clock Maudesley had left Miss Copeland, still vomiting, desperately weak, so dangerously ill that all the morning he had

been fearful of having to send for a specialist. With all the miserable horror of the night Lady Ireland must have been acquainted—a witness of most of it, possibly. Was it possible—was it credible that she should have gone out—barely an hour after Maudesley's departure—while her friend was still desperately weak and ill—to meet her friend's fiancé, to walk with him with arms interlaced, with eyes lost in his? And he? Was it credible that she had not telephoned him during the long anxious night? Had he not known, when he met her, what agony it had held? Was it credible that, with that knowledge, he could walk with her so, look at her so?

One said, humanly incredible—humanly impossible. But men and women—human beings—*did* these things—

Cancer— Little hairy-pawed Maudesley had lowered his voice as he had said the word, and looked towards the shut door of the room. In what tone would he have said another word? How would he have looked? *Would* he have dared to say it—yet?

Poison—*Poison*—POISON.

The stripped woods caught up the ugly word—shouted it. Their naked boughs tossed it from tree to tree in the stir of the changing wind. Rain was coming after a thaw: the woods were full of uneasiness.

Poison— Classic, stupid, bungling poison— Was it credible?

Something stirring, indeed—

Pacing to and fro before his study fire slowly, Gore juggled for an hour or so with every piece of information concerning Miss Copeland, which he had in his possession.

She was the daughter of a foreman of Sir William's, employed at the Waterley Brick and Tile Works. Sir William had interested himself in her father, and—

as she had grown up—in her, because her father had acted with promptitude to save him from serious injuries or, possibly, death. She had been well educated, it seemed, and given a secretarial post—in close contact with Sir William—at the Waterley Works. She appeared to have attained a position of unusual confidence with Sir William.

Lady Ireland had always been kind to her, and had her down to Shenstone Castle sometimes to stay a night. She had known Burchall, too (it seemed, intimately), for some years (a curious and difficult situation for a secretary-typist).

She—on her own statement, had been practically the last person to whom Sir William had spoken of his family affairs, before his death. She had helped him to draw out the draft of his new will, and had typed it and dispatched it to his solicitors. (Sir William had visited his solicitors that afternoon. Had this trusted secretary-typist accompanied him?)

Under the will, of which probate had actually been taken out, Miss Copeland came in for an annuity for life of £500. £500 a year—for a secretary-typist—the daughter of a foreman—was a handsome remembrance indeed. But, of course, the foreman had saved his life.

Had that draft drawn up with Miss Copeland's aid the afternoon of October 28th intended to alter *her* benefit? The Red Jacket had said nothing of that.

But even if it had attempted to multiply her £500 a year by ten, did one seriously imagine there, for an instant, a motive that could sway *Cicely Ireland*?

As for Burchall—nonsense. After his stepfather's death—knowing exactly how she had benefited or would have benefited—he had engaged himself to marry her.

What had urged him to that step? Infatuation—the infatuation . . . half pity . . . that assails a man

for a pretty young eager creature in a lower social position from his own? He looked a man of the type capable of that rashness. Had he repented of it? Or had it always been merely a mask—a distraction for onlookers from a passion that had already risked murder—safely?

Yet, even if it was merely a camouflage, could one dream that murder was being risked again to get rid of the stalking-horse? Nonsense. Nothing more simple than for Burchall to break off his engagement—if he dared.

But—did he dare?

This young woman who knew so much—did she know something that must remain silenced? Something of that other love affair of Burchall's—something of the sinister dénouement to Sir William's protest—?

Steady now. What about these "illnesses"?

Always, of course, symptoms overlapped. This slip of a girl, who had tossed all the night through in desperate sickness and anguish, might very well have eaten an ice too much, or a doubtful hors-d'œuvre. Or a slight liver chill might have turned her blood to poison. Or, just as, possibly, she might have tossed and vomited there hour after hour, as so many poor celebrities had done—poor creatures like Seddon's victim or Armstrong's—poor, snared, struggling birds—Symptoms exactly the same—So exactly the same that little Maudesley had been frightened.

Were two pairs of merciless eyes watching these deplorable writhings and retchings? Or one pair? Would mere jealousy venture on such a desperate business—alone? Possibly—but not probably.

Yet—possibly—

It was in May that Miss Copeland had come to stay at the Castle. Since then she had been Lady Ireland's bosom friend (she, who had been invited down for a

little afternoon—out in the old days, and sent back home with a bunch of roses or some strawberries for her mother). But, since May, she had been inseparable from her friend and protectress—had accompanied her to the most exclusive houses in the most exclusive of neighbourhoods. And since that had begun—these mysterious illnesses had begun.

Well——

The Shenstone Exchange was not to be trusted. Gore got into his car and drove up to Waterley. Inspector Kaye, endeavouring not to yawn, found him three doctors who, at different times during the past nine years, had attended the Copeland family. They all reported that Netta Copeland had been prone to biliousness and indigestion due to injudicious food and too much of it. In 1924 she had had an attack of ptomaine poisoning—lobsters at a Westpool restaurant. Of course there had been long periods during which none of these struggling practitioners had seen or heard anything of her. The family history was normal—mother rheumatic.

But Gore's fingers refused to put the piece back.

POISON. His car engine growled it.

Steady now——

He drove Inspector Kaye up to Westpool, and they visited the offices of Messrs. Browner & Crimby. Inspector Kaye made a valiant effort to remain awake, when he had requested that a copy of the draft for a new will sent to the firm on October 28th, 1925, by Sir William Ireland might be given to him. Before he left the solicitors, Gore had seen that, under the will that was never signed, Miss Copeland would have had exactly what she had under the last will and testament of her benefactor signed and witnessed. . . .

But, as he put away the draft, which Inspector Kaye

had handed to him, he turned to Mr. Browner. "Sir William called here that afternoon?"

"Yes. But merely to confirm his instructions. Not to sign the new will. There had not been time to prepare it. It was after half-past five when he called."

"Was he alone?"

"No. His secretary, a Miss Copeland, I think, accompanied him. She did not remain—I believe." Mr. Browner consulted his chief clerk. The chief clerk shook his grizzled head with pinched lips.

"No. Miss Copeland went away with Mr. Dudley Burchall. I met them at the corner of Forth Street."

"Did Mr. Burchall come here with Sir William?"

"No." Mr. Browner replied. "Miss Copeland must have met him outside, as she was leaving."

The Red Jacket had said nothing of that meeting either——

Now why had Miss Copeland remained in Westpool, and when and how had she returned to Waterley?

Back to Waterley with poor Inspector Kaye.

Mrs. Copeland had been summoned down to Shenstone that afternoon by a wire from Lady Ireland, to be near her daughter. But Gore was shown into the Copeland drawing-room in Friary Road, Waterley (Sir William, very large and sleek, and touched up in an expensive frame over the piano), by a friendly old maid, to write a note for the mistress of the house.

The maid was one of those female gramophones whose existence seems solely in the production of continuous sounds. One subject was to her of equal interest with any other. She poured forth reminiscences of Sir William and his visits. She passed on at a hint to the dramatic afternoon and evening of the fatal

October 28th. Mr. Burchall had come home with Miss Netta from her office that evening. Such a fine, handsome gentleman, and, lor', hadn't he pulled a face when he'd found poor Mr. Hopgood there waiting for Miss Netta—— For Mr. Hopgood had been waiting there, to see Miss Netta.

She babbled on. It was "poor Mr. Hopgood" because he was only a chauffeur. But he had been accustomed to call often, and came to the house fairly regularly, it appeared, about that time—usually about the hour when Miss Netta was expected home from her office. Always brought sweets or something for Miss Netta. But she only laughed at him, of course—— Of course, when *he* had seen Mr. Burchall coming in with her that afternoon, he had had to clear off—— The maid had been sorry for him having to clear off. Mr. Burchall hadn't stayed more than a moment. And as soon as he had gone, Miss Netta had just powdered her nose and gone out again. Miss Netta went to the pictures that night, she thought.

She suggested that Mr. Burchall had never forgotten a half-crown. Gore exhibited four.

"Sir William——? Miss Netta was very devoted to him . . . I mean, when he came here?"

The woman eyed the coins.

"Oh—well——" she said watchfully (suddenly one of the age-old figures of the eternal drama). She decided upon twisted lips and a leer. "He was an *old* thing," she said. "Many a time she and me have had a good laugh after him going away, poor old fellow. Still, he wasn't a bad old skin in his way——"

She ought to have had more to tell. But that was all that Gore could get for his four half-crowns. It was sufficient, however, to induce him to keep clear of Inspector Kaye, who had returned to his office and problems of less monotonous obstinacy.

At or about 5.30, then, on that afternoon, Burchall, determined to discover what was going forward about the new will (no doubt his friend Miss Copeland had found means to let him know that the draft had gone down to Browner & Crimby's, and that Sir William himself was going down there about 5.30), was outside the solicitor's office. Miss Copeland had left her employer in the safety of the partners' private room, and had gone out to find Burchall waiting for her. He had rushed her down to Waterley in his powerful car and left her at her house. By 6.45 this had all been done, and he was alone in the fog . . . with the knowledge that, if the new will were signed next day, neither he nor Lady Ireland would receive a half-penny of Sir William's millions. For the millions were now to go to Westpool University and Westpool General Infirmary.

And Miss Copeland knew that he knew that. She had just told him——

Poison—— The old, cruel, bungling game——

13

Robert Orange had continued to provide unfailing stimulation, encouragement and consolation. Two evenings later, Gore was seated before a fire of odorous pine logs with his eyes firmly fixed on the mathematical centre of page 73¹ of that thoughtful, if slightly depressing romance. They had remained there for perhaps twenty minutes when Stephens ushered in a figure so enveloped in overcoats, mufflers and dejection that at first Gore formed the conclusion that Inspector Kaye—for it was he—had come to disturb his digestive

¹ It appears to have escaped the Colonel's attention that he had already reached page 98.

processes with some dreary report of another cul-de-sac tried and drawn blank.

But the worthy man, when he had unclothed a little, and was seated with a pipe and a drink before the fire, proceeded to disclose tidings more sensational than those. After some preliminary writhings of coyness, and crossings and recrossings of his enormously powerful legs, he ventured to swing round and face his host.

"I've got a bit of news for you, sir. The Chief 'phoned me an hour ago to come down to you with it at once. Not my fault, sir, that you didn't hear it before."

"Let's have it," smiled Gore. "Or shall I tell you what it is?"

The Inspector stared and waited. Gore decided to spare his discomfiture.

"You've been sent down here, haven't you, to tell me that the two nurses whom Lady Ireland has had from Waterley Infirmary to attend to Miss Copeland, have been taken off duty—and replaced by others?"

Inspector Kaye's weariness spurted into a little flame of admiration.

"Got it in one, Colonel."

Gore got up and refilled his visitor's glass.

"Damn you and everyone else—including Mr. Cavendish. I suppose he's putting on two nurses of his own?"

"Yes, C.I.D. people."

"When?"

"They arrived at four o'clock this afternoon."

Gore considered the placid, depressed profile bent to the fire.

"You at liberty to tell me why they've made such damn fools of themselves? I mean, of course, Cavendish is working for something?"

"Rather. Arsenic."

Gore shrugged. "Awful pity," he said. "You've probably done incurable harm. Why the deuce didn't you come to me? I could have told you at two o'clock this afternoon that Miss Copeland has been having arsenic."

It was too much for Inspector Kaye. For the first time he displayed unmistakable interest.

"The hell you could, Colonel. What? How did you work it?"

"Got Maudesley and one of the Infirmary nurses on the job—— Of course I knew what I wanted them to find—— My specimens went up to my own pet analyst by road in the small hours this morning. I had his report by two o'clock. Well, it was a nice full report, though it wasn't a long one. Yes, I'm sorry you've made such damned asses of yourselves, Kaye. You've probably queered the pitch hopelessly. Confound it. You might have known that I could have told you anything you were capable of imagining you wanted to know."

Much more quickly than he had hoped, poor Inspector Kaye went out again into the cold of the night, bearing somewhere upon his person the draft of a telegram to Mr. Cavendish of the Home Office, which he converted into cypher as his car hurtled through the fog, and dispatched as soon as he reached Waterley. It was a very brief message. "Regret compelled resign charge case. Gore."

As for the author of this most peremptory and quite insincere message, he continued to sit before his blazing fire, pitiless of the poor Inspector, reading *Robert Orange* with determination, and wondering just how long it would take Mr. Cavendish of the Home Office to appear.

As a matter of curiosity, although no particular business brought him there, Gore dropped into the

estate office next day about midday. Theobald had succeeded in completing his toilette that morning, and was busy checking a consignment of seed. He continued his operations in the yard for some time after Gore's arrival, but joined, subsequently, the conversation which was going on round the fire in the central office. There Mr. Stairs, having politely provided the Colonel with *The Times* and a schedule of the wages list of the estate which he had just had typed for him, had ventured to comment upon a piece of news which, it seemed, was already common property in Shenstone. The two nurses from the Infirmary—Mr. Stairs knew both of them slightly, thought them very nice girls, and understood from everybody that they were most efficient and devoted nurses, like all the nurses sent out by the Infirmary—had been sent away and replaced by two nurses—well—they were Guy's nurses, Mr. Stairs had heard . . . but then most of the Infirmary nurses had been trained at Guy's, or in some other equally exacting school. Everybody was saying that it was curious that a change of the kind should have been made so suddenly. Now, if *one* nurse had been changed—but *both*—— Everybody thought it very odd.

It was at that point that Theobald came shambling in.

"Give that schedule to Colonel Gore?" he asked surlily. He picked up another copy from his own desk and ran a dusty thumb down it. "Sir William cut this to thirty per cent. below minimum in 1921. It hasn't altered by five shillings since. I hope you have a little extravagance in mind, Colonel, not retrenchment.

They discussed ploughmen and teamsmen and the market price of casual jobbers, for some little time. Theobald, softened by a promise of sundry increases in his staff, returned to the topic which he had interrupted.

"Of course," he said, "little Maudesley's a topping good little chap and all that, but it seemed to me all

along that it's not his fault that these illnesses of Miss Copeland have got better. As a matter of fact, I don't mind betting that he never has been able to make up his mind whether they are due to gastric ulcer or drains."

"It is a usual difficulty," Gore deprecated mildly. "I notice that you put your criticism in the past tense. Has Maudesley come out of the wood, then, with a mind made up?"

Theobald made a gesture with the handkerchief, which he had just used copiously.

"God!" he said, "how do I know? Stairs says it's all over the village that they've found poison. Where did they find the poison, Stairs?"

Mr. Stairs didn't know where they'd found the poison, or whether they'd found any, but everyone in the village was saying they'd found poison. He hadn't the faintest idea whether Dr. Maudesley had found it, where doctors find things, or the butler, where butlers find them.

One of the clerks was visible in the background, raising an intelligent, eager face from his ledger. Gore's geniality encouraged him to speech.

"I believe, sir," he said, "they've found arsenic in some meat extract."

Gore laughed as he rose.

"So far as I can remember," he said, "they've done that unfailingly ever since Mrs. Maybrick's time. But you don't remember her. Most interesting woman. Dr. Maudesley's larder going on all right, Mr. Stairs?"

"No complaints, Colonel."

"Good."

But Stephens came home that afternoon laden with the fullest and most lurid certainties. Arsenic had been found in the Castle drains, in Miss Copeland's hair, in a bottle hidden in a secret compartment behind

one of the shelves of the library. Lady Ireland herself had been the one to find it there. The butler had found it in the sawdust of a bin in the wine cellars. Every person, in fact, who could have found anything anywhere within the precincts of the Castle, had found a bottle containing about thirty grains of arsenic—and only half full. The other half, naturally, had either once been concealed in the person of Miss Copeland or was still concealed there.

Stephens was adding some masterly finishing touches to these details, when with a mighty screeching, an immense, sinister, grey car drew up in the drive. From it, naturally, alighted Mr. Cavendish.

He allowed himself to be admitted, and presented himself to Gore, a spectacle of Napoleonic, if slightly Chestertonian, resentment. Did Colonel Gore realise *their* difficulties in this most difficult and anxious case? Did he realise that for twelve months—that for every minute of every hour of those twelve months—every movement of every person connected with this case had been under close observation? Did he realise that these illnesses of Miss Copeland were an entirely new feature of the case? Did he realise that *they* had acted in regard to them with lightning-like rapidity the instant the need had arisen?

"I ask you," inquired Mr. Cavendish temperately, "*do* you realise that?"

"I'm afraid not," replied Gore unkindly. "You've had these illnesses lying about now for five or six months. You've let them lie—until four o'clock yesterday afternoon. Good lord, Mr. Cavendish, even I got busy two hours in front of you."

"Ayeh?" asked Mr. Cavendish. (His great grandfather had worn clogs in Burnley of mornings.)

He listened in irritable stupefaction to Gore's account

of his own investigations, and at the end of it, dropped the Napoleonic façade into the wastepaper basket. It came to "Now, my dear Colonel Gore," and "I'm sure you realise, my dear Colonel Gore——" and so on. And in the end, of course, my dear Colonel relented and consented to carry on. *But*—on the solemn understanding that under no circumstances whatsoever would his sole responsibility for the case be invaded by any further ineptitude—he used a very much less ornamental word—on the part of Mr. Cavendish or his subordinates.

Mr. Cavendish projected curiously babyish pursed lips at the view, fading visibly, from Gore's study windows.

"When you speak of harm—— Well—— How's it going to happen? I mean, we have two first-rate women on guard now."

"Your two first-rate women, Mr. Cavendish, will, I venture to predict, receive their marching orders from Shenstone Castle within the next forty-eight hours. Miss Copeland will continue to get better. Mrs. Copeland, who now has the wind thoroughly up, will at once remove her beloved daughter from a place which you may be quite sure she is now convinced is a death-trap, and will take her away somewhere else. Somewhere else where, unfortunately, we will *not* have her nicely and safely in view under the microscope. Now that, you will admit, is a pity. However, the thing is done now. Before you go, perhaps we might go through this detailed time-table, which Maudesley has given me from his case-book, of all Miss Copeland's illnesses."

Mr. Cavendish complied meekly enough, and waded through the details of the seven indispositions, more or less serious, which had marked Miss Copeland's stay at Shenstone Castle. She had arrived there on May 30th. On June 4th, she had had an attack of dizziness,

nausea, vomiting, diarrhœa, feverishness, reaching a crisis in the early morning of June 5th. Gradual recovery, nervous pains left behind. Maudesley had diagnosed as biliousness. June 29th, another precisely similar attack, not so severe. July 26th, another similar attack, same severity, but patient recovered more rapidly. Nervous pains in extremities, however, persisted longer. August 20th, September 25th, October 31st and December 3rd, same symptoms, same severity, except last attack. Maudesley diagnosed all as biliousness, or possibly gastritis.

"You observe," Gore pointed out, "that there is a certain, pleasant, decent regularity in the length of the interval between each bout?"

Mr. Cavendish, looked very wise.

"Young women——" he began.

But Gore shook his head.

"No," he said. "I've been into all that with Maudesley. These attacks are on their own. Now if we suppose that the same cause produced them all, that means, doesn't it, that once a month, since June last, Miss Copeland has contrived somehow or other, to get a dose of, *at any rate*, a thirty-third of a grain of arsenic into her system. A dangerous sort of diet, you know. Your nurses collected any further fact?"

"Lady Ireland and the two Infirmary nurses have some idea about food or sweets eaten, or, at any rate, bought, outside the house. They say that, generally, though not always, these illnesses have come on after Miss Copeland has been out somewhere . . . on the preceding day, or, at all events, some little time before she got ill."

Gore nodded—"Precisely."

His finger ran down the list of dates and tapped each successively.

"Out for all preceding day—probably Waterley.

Out for all preceding day—Waterley and Westpool. Out preceding afternoon—Westpool. Not out for couple of days before. Out preceding morning—Waterley. Away staying with friends in Westpool for three days before. Out preceding afternoon—Waterley or Westpool, probably—not known. These are, of course, reminiscences of Lady Ireland. Apparently nothing to confirm them."

"Who got them from Lady Ireland," Mr. Cavendish asked.

"Maudesley and the Infirmary nurses."

Mr. Cavendish's bossy brow, plainly hoping to retrieve some of its lost mastery, frowned.

"But, great heavens, you surely have allowed Lady Ireland no inkling of the fact that arsenic has been discovered?"

Gore smiled tranquilly.

"No, Mr. Cavendish," he replied suavely. "You can have all the credit of that. I have no doubt whatever that Lady Ireland has been fully informed by this time of the rumours which are going through the village. Even if she hadn't, the arrival of your two nurses out of nowhere and the dismissal of her own two would, of course, set her thinking. She's a quite intelligent person. You may take it that for all practical purposes you have told her that you suspect her or some member of her household of poisoning Miss Copeland. Have we got that clear once and for all?"

Poor Mr. Cavendish decided finally to abandon his attempts to make the best of a bad job. He walked about with baby lips, looking extremely silly.

"Well——" he demanded pathetically. "How—how—how do we stand now?"

Gore got up, unlocked a dispatch box, and produced from tissue paper a very gaily-coloured little oval box, whose outer skin was made up of highly-polished,

scalloped paper. On the top was the inscription, "Pastourelle, Frères et Cie, Lyon. Chocolats Liqueur Spécialité."

"Maudesley got this box from one of the Infirmary nurses. *She* got it from Lady Ireland's room—from a shelf of her wardrobe. As you see, it originally contained liqueur chocolates . . . you know the sort of thing . . . little chocolate toys containing a few drops of sweetened alcohol of various flavours. I have found out that Miss Copeland has always been particularly fond of all chocolates, but especially of this kind of chocolate. I don't say of this particular brand of this particular chocolate, because I'm not at all sure that you can buy this particular brand in England—at any rate in Waterley or Westpool. However, I'm going into that. I do know, however, that the Infirmary nurse in question was told by Lady Ireland that she had seen Miss Copeland eat several chocolates from this particular box two or three hours before her last illness. That is to say, she ate them on the evening of December 2nd. Now, when she was taken ill, the box, with the remaining chocolates, was lying on her dressing-table. Lady Ireland, who says she suspected the chocolates—I haven't heard why—took the box away into her own room and threw the remaining chocolates into the fire in her dressing-room. For some reason she kept the box and put it away in her wardrobe. The nurse found it there without difficulty, upon receiving instructions from Maudesley to look for it."

"Well——?" asked Mr. Cavendish.

"Well——" said Gore, "that's all for the present. You may be quite sure that I'm keeping a look-out for any further information about the liqueur chocolates of Pastourelle, Frères et Cie."

Upon this colloquy there here entered from the now clammy night the unfortunate Maudesley, followed by

two outraged and tight-lipped young women in nursing uniform. He came in and spread his arms like a convulsive marionette.

"Well——" he said. "This is a pretty business. This is a nice thing for a professional man of thirty years' standing."

The pathetic cortège was too much, even for Mr. Cavendish. The spectacle of such visible defeat and humiliation dried and straightened out his own dragged plumage.

"Don't tell us, Dr. Maudesley," he entreated, in the manner of the judicial humorist, "that Lady Ireland has already rebelled against your authority."

The little doctor smiled. He clenched his hairy little paws and swore that he washed them of the case. Only by the most consummate tact had he succeeded in carrying out the idiotic instructions conveyed to him from Mr. Cavendish by Inspector Kaye, and, in explaining, by an elaborate falsehood, to Lady Ireland why the nurses employed by her were to be immediately replaced by two others of whom she knew nothing. But he had succeeded—being a consummately tactful person—in doing that. And then what had these two uninformed detectives "gone and done"? (he very nearly said "been and gone and done," poor little man). One of them had allowed herself to be caught red-handed exploring one of Miss Copeland's suitcases. The other had undertaken to cross-examine the butler. Lady Ireland, very rightly, had rung him up, ordered him up to the Castle, ordered him to remove these two busybodies from her house forthwith, and informed him that his professional services would no longer be required.

"A pretty kettle of fish," he ended.

"Rather overdone," Gore commented.

The outraged young women in the background

exhibited symptoms of extreme unwillingness to remain on exhibition as the points of a bad joke. They were put into Mr. Cavendish's big, grey car and shut up there, while, for another half-hour, Mr. Cavendish and Dr. Maudesley exchanged acrimonious repartee. The interview, however, terminated, necessarily, unsatisfactorily—except that it left Gore once more in nominal control of the situation.

Presently he was seated once more before his fire, alone with *Robert Orange*. He was still at the mathematical centre of page 73.

14

Before midday next day, his prophecy completed itself, though in a fashion that surprised him as much as he was prepared to allow anything in this case to surprise him.

Mrs. Copeland procured an ambulance from Waterley and removed her daughter from Shenstone Castle, in charge of one of the original two nurses from the Waterley Infirmary. But she did not remove her to the Copeland house in Waterley, though that journey might have been made by the invalid with almost as little risk as the one actually made. The one actually made was to the house rented by Burchall, "The Warren." In accordance with an arrangement come to, apparently, during the night, Burchall had, after breakfast that morning, packed up and made ready to depart for London—*en route*, it was known, for Mentone. By midday the Copelands were installed in the empty bachelor quarters, with the nurse in residence and Maudesley in attendance. Miss Copeland's condition had greatly improved, but Mrs. Copeland, worn out by the anxieties of the preceding days, had been obliged

to retire to bed and was invisible to callers, possibly inconvenient, certainly inquisitive.

If the speed with which this little game of General Post had been executed had outpaced Gore's calculations a little, it had left those of Mr. Cavendish and Inspector Kaye at a paralysed stand. As a matter of fact, Burchall was half-way between Paris and the *Magnifique* at Mentone before Mr. Cavendish had recovered sufficiently to reappear in Shenstone, hungering for a scapegoat. Gore assisted at a troubled consultation in a stuffy little room at the Shenstone Arms. How had such a thing happened? How had Burchall been permitted to pack his suitcases and buy a ticket and clear away to London without a finger being raised to interfere with him? Who had allowed that to be done? Whose fault was it? Mr. Cavendish *would* know whose fault it was.

"But, sir," urged the Inspector wearily, "no one has any authority to stop Mr. Burchall from going wherever he likes. Say the word and we'll have him here in this room in thirty-six hours."

"I hope," Gore suggested, "that nothing of the kind is contemplated. We have Mr. Burchall just where we want him for the moment—which is a long way from here. I'm hoping that Lady Ireland will be sufficiently fed up with the performance of your nurses in her house to clear out to some place where there's a bit more sun and a bit less official melodrama. That will help to make Miss Copeland's recovery all the more interesting . . . assuming that she *does* recover. I have no doubt whatever that she will."

Inspector Kaye's jaws suppressed a hopeless yawn, manfully.

"You still cling, sir, to the idea that Miss Copeland's illness is to be directly connected with——"

Gore cut him short.

"I never cling to ideas," he said. "I let them cling to me, if I can't help it. I'm not suggesting anything. Burchall has eliminated one possible factor. I'm hoping that Lady Ireland will be angry enough to eliminate another. That *may* give us a chance to concentrate on the others. Are you going back to Waterley, Inspector?"

The Inspector was going back, and his car carried Gore as a passenger. Mr. Cavendish's sinister vehicle led the way, and waited in a dripping parking-place in Waterley while Gore and Kaye combed the town for sweet-shops. There was only one good one; the rest were mere huckster's shops. But in the Corn Market was a small, gay, well-stocked little establishment which Miss Copeland had favoured with her custom for years past. Upon inquiry as to what kind of chocolates Miss Copeland preferred, the pleasant-mannered lady behind the counter smiled, as at a known weakness of a customer, and, turning, without hesitation took down from a shelf a gay little oval box, covered with crinkled paper and containing liqueur chocolates. They were not of Pastourelle, Frères et Cie's Manufacture, however, but of a Paris firm called Maréchal et Cie, a well-known and widely sold brand.

The proprietress of the establishment was most willing to talk of a favourite customer. Miss Copeland had a very special weakness for these chocolate liqueurs, and usually bought two or three boxes at a time. She had said—the proprietress had quite believed her—that she could eat a whole boxful at a sitting, without the slightest ill result. No, the proprietress had never heard of a Lyons firm called Pastourelle, Frères et Cie.

From the Corn Market—leaving Mr. Cavendish still sitting beneath the dripping trees in Queen's Square—Inspector Kaye and Gore drove out along Welder Road to the works of Messrs. Ireland & Bunton. They passed

the little dark house, plastered into the dingy face of the railway embankment, as they emerged from the tunnel, but saw no signs of life behind its dust-stained windows. At the works they interviewed an expectant assistant-manager, whose surprise on learning that the persons whom they *really* desired to interview were the office-boy and the charwoman, was tremendous. These two officials were at length produced, and, without hesitation, yielded exactly the information which Gore wanted from them. Miss Copeland was always eating chocolates in her office while she worked or while she didn't. At least one empty box had always been found in her waste-paper basket of mornings, while a half-empty one was sure to hang somewhere about her desk. None of the old boxes, however, were now forthcoming. With warnings to hold their tongues, the charwoman and the office-boy were left to gaze upon half-crowns and wonder what such inquiries might forebode.

The two cars passed on up to Westpool, where a similar combing produced some similar results at a couple of the more expensive confectioner's shops in Gadus Street. A little pressing elicited the fact that another customer had been in the habit of buying these particular sweets with regularity. No less a person than Sir William Ireland himself, the proprietor of the great foundries, whose grime and uproar were one of the city's chiefest glories. Once a week at least, often twice, the poor old gentleman used to come in and expend two half-crowns with always the same grim little joke.

But by this time both Mr. Cavendish and Inspector Kaye had begun to recover a sense of perspective. They wanted to know why they had been induced to take such an energetic interest in liqueur chocolates. They listened apathetically while Gore went through

the "illnesses" *seriatim* once more, and asked them to observe that everything indicated that, if arsenic had caused these illnesses, it had been administered (1) in minute quantities, (2) in minute quantities subdivided into minute subquantities.

Now the obvious—and classically usual—method of administering arsenic in that fashion was in chocolates. All the well-known amateurs, nearly, had tried them. That being so, it was surely of interest to discover that Miss Copeland was in the habit of eating large quantities of these liqueur chocolates—usually, it was to be presumed, purchased by her, but frequently presented to her—of a kind eminently adapted for poisoning purposes. Nothing could be simpler than to insert arsenic in the contents of these sweets, and close up the small breach in the outer cover by heating it.

Inspector Kaye, however, refused to be interested.

Mr. Cavendish thought the idea too plausible.

Gore left them and went back to Shenstone. He called at the estate office on his way across the park, and learned that Lady Ireland had departed that morning to London. It was not known when she would return.

15

Given that someone had been administering arsenic to this young woman at regular intervals during the past six or seven months, what was the motive?

One killed, or one tried to kill, for one of four reasons—jealousy, fear, hate or money. There were overlappings, but those were, roughly, the normal working motives.

Take them one by one—with Cicely Ireland in the corner of one's eye.

Jealousy? Burchall had engaged himself to this girl. It was pretty clear that he had forgotten a love-affair of the old days. But Miss Copeland had intruded her pert little muzzle upon Cicely Ireland's peace of mind long before that, it was to be surmised. Had the young mistress of the Castle known of old Sir William's paternal "interest" in his foreman's daughter? Of his visits to the Copeland house? Of his long, shut-up conversations with his little private secretary? If she had known, what had she made of it? What could any intelligent person have failed to make of it . . . after a glimpse of Sir William's face, even if only in a touched-up photograph?

Hate? In this case that would be jealousy, crescendo to appassionato. Certainly there was no doubt of the capacity of the little lady up at the Castle to hate. And also there was the overlap into fear.

Of what? Wasn't it possible to get one's thoughts to face that question definitely? *Did* Miss Copeland know who had murdered her employer? How did she know? Did she know that Burchall had done it? Or was there someone else so intimately connected with Lady Ireland that, to shelter him from Miss Copeland, the risk of blotting out Miss Copeland had seemed worth taking? Theobald? Ingoldsby? Hopgood? Who?

Money? Nothing of money in this case. Miss Copeland had been left an unusually handsome legacy by her employer, but no more.

Of course the same motives had to be applied to everyone who could possibly be substituted for Cicely Ireland.

Who were they?

To take one concrete instance, who were the persons who had had motive of any sort, and opportunity since the preceding May to present Netta Copeland with

poisoned chocolates, or to poison chocolates which had been presented to her or purchased by her ?

A question not to be answered hurriedly, obviously. Fortunately the width of its scope was limited a good deal by that other question : What did Netta Copeland know of Sir William's death ?

It was one of those lovely, faded tapestry afternoons at the very death of the year when the West Country hills are a mere blur of faint russets and chromes and oranges misted with grey. Gore took his doubts for a ten-mile tramp upon East Shenstone Head, and by the old British road across the moor to the ghostly camp at the top of Hangbury, and so down to tea in a lonely inn, and home in a rattling, roaring little red bus.

And, dramatically, it was up there amongst the heaving ditches and battlements of the old encampment that his first spark of inspiration¹ came to him. He stood up there and eyed the immense, melting landscape before him with, at last, a throb of coming victory.

"Well," he ejaculated. "I am a——" The rest, fortunately, blew out into Severn Sea.

Which is why he ate an enormous tea before the little old red bus came along to take him home.

It was to be some days, however, before that flash of inspiration revealed any definite, tangible result. And in the interval, came a curious little disappointment—

¹ In justice to myself, I think it necessary to state here that the above, with the kindest intentions, grossly exaggerates the condition of mind in which I ate that tea. I was most painfully unconscious of anything in the nature of an inspiration, though I plead guilty to a ray of rather muddled hope. It is true, none the less, that I consumed much more than 1s. 6d. worth of cream and scones and wort jam.—WYCK GORE.

typical of the long series of set-backs which had marked the case from the beginning.

It will be remembered that amongst the finger-marks deciphered on the brown paper wrapper in which Hopgood's knife had been enclosed, was one very clearly marked specimen of a thumb-print which it had not been possible at first to identify. Admittedly Gore had permitted himself to entertain some hopes of those most satisfactorily perfect whorls. For, at this stage, despite himself, he had begun to share a little Inspector Kaye's weary scepticism as to whether the murderer had been any person already known or already in any way connected with the case. A conviction that some outside and wholly detached hand had struck those murderous blows had begun to assert itself—a widening of the landscape of the chase, a hope of more extended possibilities.

But these expectations were doomed to abrupt extinction. Over his lonely dinner one evening, Gore had amused himself by reconstructing the movements of the knife and the brown paper on the day of the murder and the months following. He had pictured Lady Ireland on the afternoon of that fatal day, in a hurry to catch the 1.30 train after lunch, to get up to Westpool to keep her appointment with Burchall. She had probably at the last moment remembered the knife obtained from Hopgood that morning. Probably it had been brought up to her room by her maid, possibly at the last moment she had seen it, snatched up the first piece of brown paper at hand to cover it (the wrapper of a small parcel from Morny Frères, no doubt received that morning, with its gay string still partially attached to it), hurried downstairs, trying to make a parcel of it *en route*. In the hall, naturally, the butler had awaited her exit. Hurried and impatient, she would pass over the tying up of the little packet to

him, while she surveyed her reflection a last time. A large, stout, well-fed man, the Castle butler, with perhaps rather oily hands and generous-sized thumbs.

As a matter of fact, a couple of half-crowns and a little tact verified this suspicion within twenty-four hours. The butler's thumb shut in once more the case within its old limits. He remembered very distinctly tying up the wrapper for his mistress on the afternoon of October 28th, as she went out !

16

With the larger and historical estate of Shenstone Castle, Sir William had purchased also a smaller adjoining estate, no less illustrious, from the guide-book point of view—Albuckham Hall, the one-time residence of a truly British and boring poet. Ugly though the house was, the grounds of Albuckham Hall were one of the show spots of the county, all the more lovely for the century of neglect which had permitted their glory to decline into a picturesque wilderness. A private public road passed through the grounds, climbed a hill to a magnificent view, and went off to nowhere in particular. For fifty years the place had been chiefly devoted to the wanderings of cows, rabbits, and an authentic ghost.

But, with Sir William's coming, interest in the show-spot had for some reason revived, and he had found it necessary to mark off this minor estate from the adjoining Castle grounds by profusely scattered barbed wire and notice-boards. Only after prolonged negotiations had he been persuaded to permit the use of the private road to the inhabitants of some half-dozen new houses built upon the slope running down from the south-western side of Albuckham Park. In the end

however, he had agreed. And so it resulted that, to reach these houses, one ascended by the road passing the agent's house to the gates of Albuckham Hall, through Albuckham Park, past Albuckham Hall, and so to the various branching side-avenues leading to the new residences.

Of these "The Warren" was the smallest—though for a bachelor, of lavish accommodation—and the farthest up the hill. Artistically, but thoroughly fenced about by hedges and walls and outbuildings, and by its isolation, it was a difficult house to approach without attracting attention, all the more so as Burchall kept a small pack of dogs of all breeds imaginable, whose clamour broke out at the sound of a footstep a full half-mile distant in the stillness. These animals he had left behind in the nominal charge of the outdoor servants whom he had bequeathed to the new tenants.

Picture, however, Stephens—late sergeant—spruce and clean as a new pin, sauntering down the slope of The Warren's side avenue on a frosty morning at the end of the first week in December. He is convinced that nothing could be more misleading of his purpose than his appearance. But, alas! Stephens, if the possessor of ten thousand excellencies, is a poor judge of the intelligence of his fellow-mortals. Practically every soul belonging to The Warren's household is aware that for several days past he has loomed mysteriously in the house's offing. This morning somebody has been detailed specially to find out why. A very smartly capped and aproned maid flutters out on to the path with two yapping Cairns and a mastiff as big as a calf. Stephens—ex-sergeant, and once a great man with the girls—produces the good old square-push. He has recognised in the trim maid, fickle Phœbe Carr, niece to the stationmaster. This has surprised him a little, and his *blague* is not as successful

as it might have been thirty years ago. Phoebe raises a richly carmined disdainful upper lip at him. No. She has seen nothing of a small white terrier with liver spots. She doesn't care whether it is a lady liver terrier or not. She conveys that if it got into The Warren grounds, the probability is that the mastiff ate it. She directs rather vicious attention to the fact that The Warren grounds are private, and releases her hold, somewhat ostentatiously, of the mastiff's collar. Stephens, a wise man, retires as gracefully as possible.

The appearance of Phoebe Carr in such close proximity to Miss Copeland was unexpected and a little disturbing. If Stephens was a poor actor, he was an excellent hand at standing drinks, and he found out very quickly that the Copeland's housemaid had been engaged upon the recommendation of Hopgood, who, as Gore was aware, was now in the habit of paying regular visits to The Warren. The link-up was a curious one, and concentrated Gore's attention upon Hopgood for some days.

Hopgood was now chauffeur to the Misses Fraser, two wealthy and infirm old ladies, who occupied a very lovely new house called "Bellevue," separated from The Warren by a four-acre paddock and an orchard. He and Phoebe Carr were, therefore, for all practical purposes, living under the same roof. Which mattered because Miss Copeland happened to live under it also.

Without considering that he was breaking the understanding with Mr. Cavendish, Gore decided at this point to direct the attention of his staff to Hopgood's previous career. Full particulars of it, however, were forthcoming with ease and without delay. "Henry Hagar Hopgood, 34, son of Julius Hopgood, F.R.C.S., born Nottingham 1892, clerk, Royal Provident Assurance Company, Nottingham branch, 1909-1914. Served H.M. Forces (R.A.F. and Tanks), 1914-1918. Obtained commission, Tanks Corps, 1917. Three times wounded.

D.S.O. Did not return to former employment. One year's training Vulcan Garages, S.E. Subsequently employed as chauffeur by Sir William Ireland, from May 1921 to November 1925. Nothing known against him. Relatives respectable, middle-class folk in Midlands. No money. Father committed suicide during war."

Local impressions and criticisms had long ago been garnered in and stored away. In Shenstone Village, Hopgood bore the best of reputations and was extremely popular, save with the more advanced Communists and other wild men of the community, despite the fact that he was "a bit of a gent" and prone to keep himself a little more than usual to himself.

In appearance he was a strong, healthy young man, of more than average height, with one of those rather unfinished, but engaging English faces from which one expects instinctively unbrilliant efficiency and as much honesty as can reasonably be hoped for from any human being. Gore had a little chat with him one morning, about this time, in Albuckham Park—on general topics, including the job of shover to the Misses Fraser. Hopgood seemed perfectly contented now—perhaps because of the proximity of Miss Copeland; he had no desire to change his quarters. The conversation went back to the Somme and the Salient, and for nearly twenty minutes Gore's unblinking grey gaze searched the eyes and lips that smiled and chatted in a full sunlight without the least self-consciousness or reticence.

If Hopgood had anything to conceal, a very great artist had been lost to the stage. And yet, beyond all doubt, it was Hopgood who had waited by the tunnel in Welder Road for nearly three hours on the evening of October 28th, 1925.

See Stephens, spruce as ever, still in search of a little lady liver-and-white dog. He can't keep out of the

by-avenue of The Warren, or the shrubberies that conceal the walls, or the angles of the outbuildings. His efforts to avoid attracting attention are pathetic. Phœbe Carr, who has apparently been detailed to keep an eye on him, evidently reaches a conviction that this is quite unnecessary. Once or twice the dogs kick up a hubbub and bring her into sight, sharp-eyed, and sometimes sharp-tongued. But even the mastiff despises Stephens for his clumsiness. He takes to smoking a pipe placidly in full view of the back windows. But this is a little too much for Miss Copeland.

Miss Copeland by this time was on foot, pale, thin, rather frightened-looking about the eyes, and desirous of a seat when she had walked twenty yards or so. Yet she was able to walk down the length of the long avenue to the letter-box near the gate one morning, and toil back up the hill unaided.

Gore's car overtook her before she had well begun this return journey. But she refused his offer of a lift with curt iciness. Chiefly she spent her time at the window of her room, staring at nothing in particular. The appearance of Stephens right in the middle of her landscape, perched on a gate smoking his pipe, aroused her to a display of energetic irritability. Phœbe Carr summoned the assistance of the gardener—a most unwilling ally, for he knew Stephens well—and of Hopgood. There was a prolonged argument—not for nothing had Stephens spent twenty-one years in chewing the rag—and it took something over half an hour to clear the view of the obnoxious smoker. By that time (it was about 11 o'clock, the hour when the dustbins were at their full) Gore had had ample time to make exhaustive search in two large receptacles standing just outside the scullery door. In one of them he found three empty boxes, still gay, still smelling of chocolate. Two of them bore the label of *Maréchal*

Frères et Cie, of Paris, the third the label of *Pastourelle Frères et Cie*, of Lyon.

With this loot lying on the carpet at his feet, Gore put in an hour of hard thinking before lunch-time. Some time or other the defences of The Warren must be stormed. But not yet. Another covert must be drawn first.

The weather had settled to a break of Christmas-card seasonableness—days of crisp sunshine and earth that rang under one's feet. Fairy Christmas-trees, whose weighted plumes thawed scarcely a drop of their white burden during the short day, flaming sunsets, with a tang of the coming night's frost that carried one back to the ecstatic days of boyhood and the feverish fumbling of numbed fingers with gimlets and skate-strap buckles. Even Welder Road was filled with something of the old glamour of Christmas's coming, grimy as it was, as Gore made his way along it from the town, and, emerging from beneath the tunnel, came in view of the untidy silhouette of Ireland & Bunton's stacks and sheds and furnaces, reared against the last flare of the sunset.

To his left lay the ugly, lozenge-shaped little house, flattened into the embankment. Although the light within it could only have been dusk, not a gleam of lamp or candle showed in its gloomy little façade, and yet there was someone in there—someone who was whistling in a short staccato, pointed with unusual expression, a well-known air from *Samson and Delilah*. Perhaps Madame Brochard herself was the *siffleuse*; Gore was aware that she possessed unusual musical accomplishments, and had, in former days, given lessons in the piano, the violin, and the guitar, as well as in French, German, and Italian. He was about to ascend the two steps to the blistered little hall door, when a man's voice, obviously just the other side of it, arrested him.

"*Dépêche-toi, Tante Marie. Ce n'est guère amusant, tu sais, cette cave moisie de la tienne. D'ailleurs, j'ai faim.*"

And a shrill feminine voice, hurried and affectionate, replied from above :

"*Un moment, Jules.*"

Gore had just time to reach the cover of the dim recess at the foot of the steps leading up on to the embankment, when the hall door opened, and a large man in a fur overcoat issued forth on to the steps of the house and blew a cloud of cigar smoke at the sunset. For a little while longer he waited, and then *Tante Marie*, in a curious garment which Gore connected vaguely with the word *pelisse* and the Second Empire, joined him. *Madame* shut and locked the hall door carefully, and the pair went off into the darkness of the tunnel towards the town.

Presently Gore followed them at a discreet distance.

At the end of Welder Road they climbed into a bus, and it was only by the dint of long legs and excellent physical condition that Gore did not lose sight of them before an empty taxi, returning from the station, came in sight. The chase ended quickly at the largest and most popular restaurant in the town. There Gore filled himself with tea and sandwiches, while *Tante Marie* and her nephew, a few yards away from him, regaled themselves with enormous quantities of black coffee and *petits gâteaux*.

The nephew was of that type of Gallic largeness and stolidity which surprised so many British minds during the war. He had one of those large, massive, blue-white faces, with hooked nose and violently jutting chin, sleepy, apathetic, yet watchful black eyes, and fleshy, heavy lips beneath a ludicrous little wisp of moustache, which, to the English eye, convey an impression of almost animal-like indifference and insolence. In

build he was tremendously powerful, with the shoulders of an athlete of the outer boulevards. A dangerous person to offend by a too intrusive curiosity. But to his aunt he was all solicitous affection, and she, on her side, appeared to adore him. They spoke in French, loudly and continuously, and without attention to their neighbours. At least one-third of their conversation had reference to relatives and friends in Paris and at Lyon. The nephew's earnest desire appeared to be that his aunt should leave "*sâle Waterley*" for good and all, and return to Lyon, which, it seemed, was her native place. But to his urgency she replied with a dubiously shaken head, while she nibbled her little cakes. Her air was mysterious. Presently, perhaps, she would see. But for the moment . . . there were reasons. Yes, one would see.

The meal ended, she accompanied her nephew to the station, where he recovered a suitcase from the cloakroom. He went off in a third-class smoker for Westpool and Paddington, having affectionately embraced his aunt on both cheeks. And in a first-class smoker two compartments away from him, went Gore.

At eleven o'clock on the following morning, a rather dilapidated-looking but picturesque figure, arrayed in the negligée fashionable in certain circles down Chelsea way, pressed the button of a third-floor flat in Berners Street, and then waited, regarding tranquilly a handsome black and gold plate bearing the inscription, "*M. Jules Simon Feuillet, Ateliers.*" The door opened and M. Feuillet was revealed, chillingly indifferent to his visitor's business. He consented, however, to inspect the two impressionistic daubs which the visitor submitted to his notice, but vouchsafed merely a contemptuous lift of one corner of one heavy lip.

"No use to me, my dear fellow," he said, in quite excellent English. "Why not try the abattoirs?"

"Why the abattoirs?" the velveteened artist asked mildly.

"It seems," replied M. Feuillet, "that the humane killers do not kill quickly enough."

He held out the two nightmare monstrosities to his would-be client. The client laughed good-humouredly, but made no attempt to recover possession of his property. Instead, he turned, crossed the room swiftly, and, pushing open a door marked with a large "*Ateliers*," peered in. In there was a collection of more or less artistic bric-à-brac of varying descriptions, some pictures, finished or unfinished, lumps of strange sculpture, and beyond, more doors leading to more "*Ateliers*." Gore sniffed. "What is this *siccatif* you use, M. Feuillet?"

Feuillet, who had watched him like a cat, but had made no move, yawned.

"*Siccatif*? That is my hair-wash. Well, I am busy, if you are not. Good morning, my friend. Do not forget the poor cows."

But the client was not ready to depart yet. He seated himself, uninvited, in a very comfortable arm-chair, and lighted a cigarette.

"Tell me, M. Feuillet," he asked genially, "where can one purchase, in London, the chocolates of Messrs. Pastourelle of Lyon?"

There was a curious, ominous little silence. With an oddly feline bending of his powerful neck, Feuillet turned his head towards the door leading to the corridor. Then, like a big cat, he rose to his feet, slid to it, locked it, and dropped the key into his pocket.

"You wish to know——?" he asked, with a most unengaging smile.

"Where one can buy the chocolates of Messrs. Pastourelle of Lyon," Gore repeated quietly. "Stay where you are, Feuillet. It will be healthier."

The sight of the little automatic which had appeared in his visitor's hand, brought to a pause Feuillet's movement across the room. For just a moment longer he weighed, visibly, the chances of a rush, but decided against them. With a rather sickly smile he sat down in the chair to which Gore's polite gesture invited him.

"You were asking——" he said. "Oh yes. You wish to know. I regret that I cannot tell you where you can buy these chocolates in London. I myself procure them directly from Lyon. M. Pastourelle *ainé* is a little related to me. Why do you ask, Monsieur——?"

"My name is Burgoyne," said the visitor. "You are in the habit, I think, of supplying a Miss Copeland, who lives at Waterley, with these chocolates."

Feuillet had begun to recover his colour and his smile. "Yes, yes," he said, without hesitation. "I procure them for Miss Copeland, though not directly. My aunt, who lives at Waterley, has asked me, for some time past, to get these chocolates for Miss Copeland, who is very fond of them. I have not the pleasure of Miss Copeland's acquaintance. She is, without doubt, a friend of yours?"

The big man was obviously perfectly willing to supply all possible information about the boxes of chocolates which he had procured from Lyon. He showed Gore his latest consignment, one dozen boxes, of which, he said, he intended to retain three for gifts to a little friend. The remainder were going off to his aunt at Waterley by that evening's post. He displayed no anxiety, no uneasiness, with regard to the aunt—told Gore all about his recent visit to her—a good deal of his family history, and became quite amusing again with regard to Gore's two monstrosities. It was true that the cat-like vigilance never left his dark, liquid eyes, and that Gore was careful to preserve a gap of six

clear feet between their chairs. Whatever else the "*ateliers*" might contain, it seemed clear that Feuillet did carry on an art-dealer's business of sorts. He took Gore into the first big room and showed him some rather good stuff in the way of miniatures and enamels. As they got nearer to the inner door, the odour of that curiously pungent *siccatis* increased; but Gore made no comment upon it, though by this time Feuillet made no pretence of concealing his suspicion that his visitor was an individual a good deal more serious than a daubing crank from Chelsea. The interview ended amicably. Gore left the two monstrosities behind, and accepted, without second thoughts, the gift of a box of Messrs. Pastourelle's chocolate liqueurs.

This big black cat knew nothing of the sinister use to which his relative's wares had been applied. He had something to conceal—something that interested Gore very nearly as much as chocolate liqueurs. But he was not a poisoner nor an assistant one. Of that, Gore returned to Waterley tolerably convinced.

But it was going to be interesting to see what effect his visit to Feuillet was going to have upon *Tante Marie*, perhaps.

17

Dark days, sodden with rain—Albuckham Park a dreary, sighing, deserted desolation, the sandy avenue a quagmire. Most of the inhabitants of the new houses had fled away to sunshine. Only the Misses Fraser and the Copelands remained, shut up hermetically. Hopgood alone broke the silent solitude of the avenue at intervals, bound for the village, or returning, on foot or in his car, cheerfully indifferent to his surroundings.

Two or three times Beechinor, that incorrigible, unkempt poacher, came down a tawny slope to stand talking with the spruce chauffeur in the rain—not long conversations, but earnest ones, in which Hopgood did most of the talking. Then Beechinor would go back up the slope in pursuit of the pheasants. Intimate friends, it seemed, these two, now. That was new. One day Theobald's heavy figure came down a slope with Beechinor's, to waylay Hopgood. Though there was no concealment whatever about these interviews, which might well have been meetings of the purest chance.

Too wet for Phœbe Carr to stray in the paddock. Not a glimpse of Miss Copeland or her mother. It was a dreary watch. Gore and Stephens took turns at it, finding shelter in the sad emptiness of the vast, ugly, white building which had once housed a Laureate. It housed other things now. The pigeons had got in there, and a pair of wild cats of amazing unfriendliness were rearing a family in what had once been the Laureate's study. But at last, late in the morning of the third day, a small, slowly moving figure passed up the hill and turned down The Warren side avenue. The rain was torrential that morning, and it was with acute surprise that Gore watched Madame Brochard, sheltered only by a battered old umbrella, do sentry-go to and fro by The Warren gates, until at length she attracted the attention of Phœbe Carr. With still greater surprise, he saw Miss Copeland appear presently, descending the avenue beside the little Frenchwoman. They went past Albuckham Hall, Madame Brochard gesticulating and talking at the top of her voice, it seemed to Gore, angrily and threateningly.

A pause, and then Hopgood emerged from The Warren gates with Phœbe Carr, reconnoitring anxiously. The young woman pointed, Hopgood broke into a trot

down the avenue, and went by, waving a threatening hand.

"Here," he shouted. "Stop that, now. None of that. Stop it, I say."

More clatter of angry voices. Hopgood reappeared, escorting back Miss Copeland, apparently in a state of collapse. Phoebe Carr, in her fluttering ribbons and cap, but impervious now to rain, came hastening to meet them. All three disappeared into The Warren.

Something amiss with Madame Brochard. *Tante Marie* had, perhaps, heard from her dear nephew in Berners Street.

Next morning brought two curious developments. The *Morning Post* contained the following paragraph :

"The marriage arranged between Miss Netta Copeland, daughter of Mrs. Copeland and the late James Copeland, of Waterley, and Mr. Dudley Burchall, The Warren, Shenstone, Somerset, will not take place."

And before eleven o'clock Inspector Kaye had come down to the agent's house to report that, on the previous evening, Henry Hopgood and David Beechinor had been taken into custody on the charge of breaking into the premises occupied by Madame Brochard, during the absence of Madame Brochard from her house. So far as was known, they had not attempted to remove any property. Madame Brochard, who, it seemed, had caught them red-handed upon her return to the house, had, upon consideration, withdrawn her charge against both prisoners, and they had been released, after a couple of hours' detainment at the police station. The men had refused to give any explanation of their presence in the house, and had, admittedly, made no effort whatever to escape when discovered by Madame Brochard. The evidence of some workpeople engaged

on Messrs. Ireland & Bunton's premises across the road, went to suggest that a third man had assisted in the raid, and that a considerable amount of property *had* been removed in several bulky packages in a motor-car, shortly before Madame Brochard's return. This evidence was, however, rather vague. Beechinor and Hopgood both denied strenuously that they had had an ally. Madame Brochard denied that any property had been removed.

"Well?" asked Inspector Kaye. "What's their game, sir? It's a bit out of my class. Perhaps you'd like to see these two fellows. I've brought them along in the car."

But Gore shook his head smilingly.

"The man I want to see," he said, "is the third man. You might keep Hopgood and Beechinor amused for the next twelve hours or so. I'll leave it to your discretion how you'll do it. And you might put a man on to that house in Welder Road for me, will you? A nice, unobtrusive man."

Now, in that direction, Gore relied too little upon the worthy Inspector's acumen, as will be seen—a mistake which very nearly caused a good deal of trouble. But his mind was already busy patting and teasing this latest-moved piece of the puzzle into its place. Inspector Kaye went away with his two unwilling charges, leaving the Colonel in a very brown study indeed.

It was with an extraordinary unwillingness that Gore compelled himself at length to acknowledge the truth. There were two absolutely distinct trails in this hunt. That they crossed and re-crossed, as yet it was not quite clear how—in that little dingy, lozenge-shaped house, plastered into the sooty railway embankment at Waterley—was, however, now certain. Useless to persist in trying to unlock two locks with one key.

At any rate, the first step was to lay Jules Feuillet by the heels.

This was done that night unobtrusively, just as M. Feuillet was engaged in his customary physical exercises before retiring to bed. He was very indignant, both at not being allowed to complete the exercises, and at not being allowed to retire to bed when he had done so. Some very polite but insistent gentlemen from Scotland Yard made a thorough inspection of the "*ateliers*," which they then sealed up carefully. M. Feuillet was requested to reclothe himself and was taken elsewhere. Scotland Yard was very polite to Messrs. Gore & Tolley in this matter. Naturally, they explained, M. Feuillet—and his "*ateliers*"—were their pigeon. But, of course, if Colonel Gore desired to examine Feuillet—— Gore got into communication with Mr. Cavendish, however, and the official mind altered its standpoint a little as to pigeons. That admitted, Gore ran up and had a talk with M. Feuillet.

M. Feuillet's story was extremely interesting—one of those stories that usually end in a brutally indifferent little paragraph in an appendix to an entirely obscure blue book. But we shall come to that presently. Mr. Dudley Burchall had been arrested at Arcachon before Gore had succeeded in inducing M. Feuillet to part with his reminiscences. When that illuminating little narrative had been heard in full, however, Mr. Burchall was at once released with many apologies. And, as Gore had anticipated, within thirty-six hours he was back in Shenstone, looking very grim and anxious indeed. But long before that the third man in the mysterious raid on Madame Brochard's premises had been identified.

Theobald was not well that grey morning when Inspector Kaye and his subordinates arrived to disturb the breakfast hour of the estate office. He was in bed, making a poor hand of some toast and kidneys, and

Beechinor had encircled his brow with a wet towel—an ornament which did not set off an unshaven, sagging face to special advantage. However, he took the entry of the Law upon his *déshabillé* with surprising good humour, though he refused point-blank any explanation of the facts for which he was requested to account.

Gore summed up the facts very briefly for the benefit of the still unenlightened Inspector Kaye.

Some time within the preceding twelve months, the vultures in the neighbourhood of the Kyber Pass might, if they had not been otherwise too busy, have seen a caravan of small size, but escorted unusually formidably, crawling towards the head of the Pass. That caravan had come down out of Tibet, and in charge of it was M. Jules Simon Feuillet. It crawled on (there had been curious negotiations, not yet quite clear, with the Customs) down the Pass to railhead. There two tons of packing-cases had been railed to Bombay. And M. Feuillet had travelled with them personally. From Bombay they had been shipped to Madagascar (with some delays *en route* owing to snapped screw-shafts and other little troubles of that sort, which had involved a call at the Seychelles). From Madagascar, where they had been handed over to a Colonel Pietzpoulos, they had gone to Abyssinia, and so to Egypt. From Egypt they had found their way to Liverpool, and from Liverpool—where they had never been landed—they had made their way, apparently without the slightest difficulty, in two fast motor-boats to the lonely beach between Hawley-on-Sea and the marshes into which the Sallow discharged its dreary waters. From there a vehicle so innocent as a Ford box-body had completed the romantic journey of the mysterious cases to the house by the tunnel in Welder Road—under the direction of M. Feuillet, who had reappeared somewhere in the Bristol Channel.

S.-C.M.

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Not the first, by several, this consignment of oddly smelling cases. The Pietzpoulos-Feuillet Syndicate (there were other names behind theirs, and other money) had been operating now for over eight years, without a hitch. A lucrative business, it appeared, for the wares they had to dispose of commanded stiff prices in France and along the Mediterranean seaboard. Even in England there was quite a thriving little market for them, especially in the seaport towns. In a word, the contents of M. Feuillet's packing-cases were black, rather sickly-smelling cakes of bhang—otherwise hashish.

"And now, Mr. Theobald," Gore asked, "will you kindly tell us why you and Hopgood and Beechinor broke into Madame Brochard's house on Thursday evening last, and removed this stuff? Also where it now is?"

Theobald pushed away his breakfast tray with a final grimace of revolted disgust, and helped himself to soda-water.

"Go to hell," he remarked pleasantly.

Having thus defined his attitude, he stuck to it immovably. Nor could any inducement prevail upon his fellow-conspirators to give away the secret of their mysterious operations. The situation was a little awkward for Inspector Kaye, as he explained. Here was flagrant and admitted breaking of the Law. Well—oughtn't something to be done about it? Was this utterly boring and never-ending case to be taken as an excuse for people to break into other people's houses while they were out, and steal highly illegal drugs in large quantities, and carry them off in motor-cars, and hide them Heaven knew where? Gore said he was afraid that it was so, and suggested that the return of Mr. Burchall, who was expected at the Castle that night, should be awaited

Another shock for the poor Inspector. Another breaking of the Law, confessed to unashamed. Mr. Burchall, without hesitation, gave a lucid account of a little raid which he himself had conducted some time previously (as a matter of fact, upon that evening upon which Gore and he had collided in the little recess at the foot of the embankment in Welder Road) upon Madame Brochard's premises. He had made his way into the upper storey by the steps leading down from the railway embankment—he refused to explain why—and finding, after some search, a couple of cakes of an evil-smelling and suspicious-looking substance lying under some papers on a table in an adjoining bedroom, had taken possession of them, and brought them home for further investigation. Again he refused to explain why. Of Mr. Theobald's venture he knew nothing, and for it cared less. He admitted that he was aware, now, that the substance which he had found was Indian hemp; upon discovering this, he stated, he had got rid of his stolen goods by dropping them into the Robin Hood furnace at The Warren.

So the matter rested. Inspector Kaye and his subordinates went back to Waterley palpably disgusted.

Gore, though it was clear that the occupant of the bed desired nothing less than his company, paid an after-dinner visit to the bedroom of the convalescent at the estate office. The convalescent had recovered sufficiently to begin the task of making himself unwell again. Mr. Stairs was found endeavouring to restrain this attempt. He greeted Gore's appearance with a sigh of relief. He hoped that Colonel Gore could perhaps persuade Mr. Theobald to get a sedative from Dr. Maudesley.

The patient sat up in bed, caught his knees about with his arms and fixed eyes of amusement upon the visitor.

"Hullo, Colonel Sherlock Holmes Gore! Back again? Where are the bloodhounds? Have a drink? Funny thing. I knew your old phiz was familiar, somehow. Stupid of me not to have recognised you, though. You're the chap that fixed out that business up in Surrey last year. I met Lady Gould once or twice—— Interesting woman. Very unkind of you to have hidden your light under a bushel so long. Do have a drink, won't you, old chap, before you go? All right, Stairs. Go up to Maudesley and get me a six-ounce bottle of morphia, three grains of strychnine, and a hypodermic. I shall feel just like using them by the time you get back."

Stairs smiled. "You'll feel better in the morning, Mr. Theobald. Though I do wish you'd let me get a sleeping draught of some sort for you." He went away to a belated dinner with the promise that he would look in again before bedtime.

Theobald waited until the sound of his subordinate's footsteps had died away towards the far side of the building. He yawned.

"If you want to know where that confounded stuff is, Mr. Detective, it's over at the old copper-workings, in the shaft."

Gore shook his head. "It is *not*, Mr. Theobald," he said.

"It *is*," persisted Theobald, producing his eyes ghoulishly from beneath his towel.

"It is *not*," repeated Gore. "I thought about that old shaft this afternoon, and went to look. But someone else had been there before me—with a six-ton lorry, I should say, to judge from the tracks. The stuff's gone all right."

Theobald tore off his towel, got out of bed, and got into his clothes in furious silence. Summoning Stairs by telephone from the Shenstone Arms, and Beechinor

from a love-affair with Dr. Maudesley's cook, he stuck them in the back of his car, and, with Gore at his side, drove that ill-used vehicle a mile and a half up a landslide of a track and across a moving bog of ploughland to the squat, grey tower which protected the old copper-workings from reckless small boys. But there was nothing to be seen there except the deep wheel-marks of a heavy lorry. These it was hopeless to attempt to follow in the darkness. The romantic wanderings of those much-travelled packing-cases were not done with yet.

Stairs, who had not been enlightened as to the motive of the visit to the copper-workings, permitted himself a respectful curiosity on the return journey. His suspicion appeared to be that some person or persons was or were believed to have fallen down the shaft. His disappointment was visible when he learned that this was not the case.

But Beechinor, that tireless moocher, was able to throw a little light. He had been putting down some wires not so very far from the copper-workings late that afternoon, and he remembered that he had heard the sound of a powerful engine churning along somewhere in his neighbourhood and making rather a fuss about it. He had concluded that it was an oil or petrol tank on the move on the main road, and had paid no further attention to it.

They drove along the Waterley road, making inquiries here and there, but only succeeded in discovering that, as a matter of fact, one of the United Oils Company's Motor Tanks had delivered at various points, both in Shenstone and along the Waterley road, between three o'clock and six, that afternoon.

But Stairs remained as keen as mustard. He volunteered to get busy with his motor-bike at once, and, Theobald having assented to this proposal, went

off into the darkness to pick up the lorry-tracks in the lane, and endeavour to run them down. The roads were in nice condition for a bit of Boy Scout work, he laughed, as he disappeared with an ear-splitting bang from his silencer.

"Smart chap, that," said Gore.

"Bloody smart," said Theobald.

"I can't understand," said Gore, as they put the car away, "why you took such pains about this stuff, Theobald. What did you want it for? I mean, you seem to do pretty well on whisky."

Theobald laughed good-humouredly. "Sorry I can't gratify your curiosity." He became grave. "I suppose you've got eyes in your head, Mr. Detective—as well as a nose on it? Please don't persist. You'll get nothing out of me, and I've got a headache like six cats in a barbed-wire drum."

"Very well, Mr. Theobald," Gore agreed. "Let's try something else. You remember that my bedroom ceiling got damaged a couple of weeks ago? Mr. Stairs very kindly fetched up a couple of men to put things right inside. A few days later, he came up again to do a little job on the roof for me. But before he began it, you came up, took him off the job, and took charge of it yourself. Now, my reason for getting a hole made in my roof over my bedroom was that I expected to find something, perhaps, in the hole. However, in the end, I didn't look for it, because I felt pretty sure that you had found it first. Am I right?"

Theobald nodded—"Quite."

"A 0.22 bullet?"

"Quite."

"Thanks. That being so, would you care to tell me about that little accident of yours while you were going home after your visit to me the afternoon that I moved into the agent's house. I really don't want the details.

I merely want to know how you came to part company with that rook-rifle you were carrying that afternoon, and when it came back into your possession. Care to tell me that ? ”

Theobald hesitated. “ I’m making no charges,” he said. “ I don’t want to be mixed up in anything. Something or someone put me out for a good bit. It was pitch black, as you remember, that evening. When I came back, I knew Beechinor was somewhere up the hill after birds. I tried to find him, and then I got silly again, and went down in the bracken, and stayed there for God knows how long. I didn’t get home until about two o’clock in the morning, because I had done in an ankle falling, somewhere or other. I don’t know when the gun was put back, but it was in its usual place, in the hall of the office, after breakfast next morning. I didn’t put it there. Now, for God’s sake, don’t bother me any more. I don’t want to be mixed up in any more trouble. I’ve had enough of it. Come in and have a drink, and tell me some funny stories.”

But Gore declined that invitation. Things were beginning to move a bit too quickly.

18

Stairs returned late in the afternoon of the following day, white and tired and unsuccessful. He returned by train, with the ruins of his motor-cycle in the guard’s van, having had the worse of a head-on affair with a car somewhere near Frome. He said that he believed he had tracked the lorry-wheels to there, or thereabouts, but they had disappeared in a morning of wind and scouring rain.

Gore was down at the estate office when the motorcyclist got in and heard his report at first-hand.

"I'm afraid you got off the line somewhere, Mr. Stairs," he smiled. "We've got that lorry all right. It was found early this morning down by the shore at Lymington. You know Lymington, perhaps? If you do, you'll know the Salterns. Handy place for a motor-boat, the Salterns. I expect those packing-cases are somewhere in France by this time."

Theobald frowned.

"How the deuce could a six-ton lorry get to Lymington from here in the time? If Beechinor heard her yesterday afternoon——"

"He didn't. I don't mind betting that those cases were yanked out of that shaft a few hours after you put them into it. At any rate, Messrs. Pedlow, the haulage contractors of Westpool, lost a six-ton lorry on the night after your little raid in Welder Road. And that lorry is the one that was found down at Lymington this morning—with a funny smell inside. We don't know where she was in the interval, but I'm pretty sure that what Beechinor heard yesterday afternoon was that petrol-tank after all. However, the main thing is, they've got away with the goods. Pity."

"Who are 'they,' Colonel?" Stairs said. "You think this chap Feuillet has pals still on the loose?"

"Well, Mr. Stairs," Gore replied, "six-ton lorries don't drive themselves, do they? Motor-boats *can* travel without crews, but not so conveniently as with them. I wish I had thought of that old shaft a bit sooner, Mr. Theobald. That was careless of me."

Gore went home to a tea of Westshire lavishness, and, while he consumed it, spread out the pieces of the puzzle once more before him. The picture had grown into shape a good deal; odd pieces had fitted into unexpected corners; others, that had seemed to

fit, lay still in the jumble of misfits. Still, on the whole, the bordering areas represented something like coherency. Only the core of the puzzle remained untouched—with the faces of the pieces still turned downwards.

For here, at the last lap, there must be no spoiling haste—just as there must be no bungling hesitation.

A drizzling rain was falling outside. Another beastly night coming. A quarter to five. He closed *Robert Orange* (he was still at the mathematical centre of page 73), got into cap and Burberry, and set off into the darkness with a pipe in his mouth and an inspiration in his pocket.

19

The blackness of the avenue in Albuckham Park was a palpable wall that clogged the movements of one's limbs, and once or twice, in an endeavour to conserve the energies of his pocket-torch, Gore collided vigorously with unexpected oaks and beeches. But, in the side avenue leading down to The Warren gates, the darkness was so intense that it was necessary to keep the torch going continuously. Footsteps, at first hesitating, then more confident, came squelching through wet grass. Hopgood appeared, opened the gates, and stood waiting.

"Oh! Is that you, Colonel? I thought it was Dr. Maudesley."

He continued to stand, holding the gates a little ajar—it was not clear yet whether with the intention of excluding undesired visitors. However, he stepped aside when Gore reached him.

"Is Dr. Maudesley expected?" the latter said.

The reply was hesitating—uneasy.

"I believe so. Mrs. Copeland told me about ten minutes ago that she was going to ring up for him again."

Gore's voice sharpened.

"Is Mrs. Copeland up then?"

Again Hopgood hesitated.

"Yes. She got up this afternoon. Miss Copeland has not been so well this afternoon."

"Not so well? Did Mrs. Copeland say what was the matter?"

A last hesitation—the briefest. Hopgood's uneasiness could not be restrained any longer.

"It's the same sort of thing, Colonel, as before. She's been sick—very bad. Mrs. Copeland says she ought to have got Maudesley long ago. The sickness has been going on for two or three hours now. And, of course, that silly idiot, Phœbe, didn't let Mrs. Copeland know until about an hour ago. I wonder if I hadn't better ask Miss Fraser to let me run the car down and fetch Dr. Maudesley up."

Gore considered. Humanity dictated "Yes" to this proposal, without qualification. But there was sterner business in hand than humanity of a few extra minutes.

"Yes," he replied. "Very well, Hopgood. You go and get Miss Fraser's permission to use the car, if you can. Bring her up here to this gate, and wait until I come out to you. Got that?"

"You're going in, sir?"

"Yes. I'm going in."

Hopgood squelched off hurriedly across the grass, vaulted over a fence, and vanished towards the lights of his employer's house at the far side of the paddock. Gore made his way up to the porch of The Warren and found the hall door ajar. Just inside it, Mrs. Copeland stood at a telephone instrument, with the white-faced Phœbe, drooping-mouthed, at her side. The two women turned startled faces to his entry.

They were, if disappointed that he was not the hoped-for doctor, unfeignedly glad to see him. A few rapid questions put him in possession of the facts.

Miss Copeland had been much better during the early part of that day and had eaten quite a good lunch—perfectly harmless and innocent food, Phœbe protested. After lunch, she had gone up to her own room to rest until tea-time. About three o'clock her bell had rung violently. Phœbe had gone up and discovered her in a state of collapse on the floor beside her bed. She had vomited severely for a while, but had seemed to recover after she'd been got into bed with a supply of hot bottles. The maid had noticed a box of chocolates beside the bed, but had not connected it with the illness. She had not thought it necessary to disturb Miss Copeland's mother, who was then asleep and, herself, in very poor health. About half-past four she had brought up some tea to Miss Copeland, who had, however, become violently ill again upon drinking a little of it. Seriously alarmed now, Phœbe had informed Mrs. Copeland of her daughter's condition, and several attempts had been made to get into touch with Dr. Maudesley, who had, however, been out upon a distant case. At present, the sickness had abated a good deal and the sufferer was dozing.

"I want that box of chocolates, please," Gore said peremptorily. "Will you get it for me?"

There was a conference between the two women as to which could discharge this commission with less chance of disturbance to the patient. The lighter-footed Phœbe was finally entrusted with it, and ascended the stairs on tiptoe. In her agitation, her handkerchief had smeared the frightened whiteness of her face with the artificial scarlet of her lips. Despite her nervousness, she had made a stealthy, continuous

attempt to remove the smear without attracting her mistress's attention.

There was a long pause, during which Mrs. Copeland's flaccid face and tired eyes dissolved in scared tears. Upstairs there was the murmur of voices—a cry of anger. For an instant Gore meditated the grosser inhumanity of an invasion of the sufferer's bedroom.

But he was spared that necessity.

A dishevelled, slim figure, huddled hurriedly into a dressing-gown and slippers, came scrambling down the stairs, pursued by the helpless Phoebe. It bore, pressed against its breast, one of those gay little oval boxes upon which Gore had already expended so much attention. Miss Copeland's face was ashen—the face of a woman of fifty. Her eyes, however, were bright as stars, narrowed to pin-points by the fear that strangled her voice. She pointed to the hall door.

“Go. Get out of this. You old fool, what do you want here? Mother, send him away. Get the men to put him out. I insist.”

Even then she remembered to keep the right hand, that clasped the chocolate-box, beneath the folds of her dressing-gown. Now or never. In a flash Gore was up the stairs to meet her, caught her before she could turn to retreat, wrested the hidden hand from its hiding-place, and took possession of the chocolate-box by force of arms. The other hand beat at his face savagely. But with a formal apology, he released her and stepped back to allow her to reach her mother's arms, as Maudesley's burly little figure pushed open the hall door.

The doctor had been short-circuited ten miles away and had driven back furiously in response to Mrs. Copeland's appeal. After a little debate, it was decided that Miss Copeland should be removed to the one nursing-home in Waterley of which Maudesley approved. Un-

fortunately, however, upon inquiry by telephone, a room would not be available there until ten o'clock that night. For the present, and until she could be removed, Mrs. Copeland's anxiety would be assuaged by the attendance of the nurse who had been paid off the day before.

To this suggestion Miss Copeland agreed with an unexpected eagerness. She was prepared to start for Waterley at once, and seemed especially pleased that the Misses Fraser had so kindly lent the services of their car. She was, however, got back to bed temporarily, and Gore waited below for the best part of an hour before the little doctor came downstairs again. Spread out on the slab of the hat-rack were the contents of the chocolate-box, and these he invited Maudesley to examine through a pocket-lens. In each of the seventeen sweets which remained—apparently only one had been eaten—close examination revealed the traces of a puncture, more or less carefully repaired, as Gore had surmised, by the melting of the outer casing of chocolate.

The two men eyed one another silently.

"Of course," Gore said, "I can't worry her now. But I want to know when she got this box of stuff."

"And where," Maudesley nodded.

But Gore thought he knew where it had come from. The label was that of Messrs. Pastourelle of Lyon. And, under the word "Lyon," the lens showed a tiny mark in pencil—a mark which he had placed discreetly upon each of the eleven boxes which he had left behind him in M. Feuillet's flat on the morning of his visit.

He replaced the chocolates in the box, and put it away in his pocket carefully.

"Lucky," said Maudesley, "that she got doubtful in the middle of the one she *did* try to eat, and got rid of most of it. What the devil is the meaning of it, Colonel?"

But Gore was not answering rhetorical questions just then.

"You've been attending Miss Copeland for about seven months now, Doctor. Tell me—have you noticed anything about her hands—or either of them?"

"Noticed anything? Well, no. Noticed anything? No. Except that she seemed to take great pains with them. Usually when I went to see her, she was manicuring them, or smearing them with some kind of war-paint, or something. I believe I *did* notice, now that you come to mention it, that she wore gloves, sometimes, in bed."

"You never saw any marks on either of her hands?"

"No."

"I see. Thanks. You're staying here until the nurse arrives?"

"Sorry, I can't possibly. I've got to go down to North Pier at once. Bad hæmorrhage case. But she'll be all right until ten. She swears that she has no more chocolates; at any rate, I and her mother have made a thorough search. But we've found no others."

"Probably not," Gore smiled grimly. "I don't expect that anyone thought a further supply would be necessary. Very well, Doctor, you get off. I'll keep an eye to your patient until the nurse comes."

Silence settled on the troubled house. Phœbe reported that Miss Copeland had fallen into a heavy sleep and that Mrs. Copeland, too, had gone back to bed. Gore sent the maid back to her young mistress, and settled himself in a chair in an untidy sitting-room. Apparently the Copelands had been on the point of a move out of The Warren, now that Burchall had returned. Everywhere were the signs of packing begun, and abandoned.

He allowed a quarter of an hour to elapse and then

summoned the maid to the landing above him, by a muffled call. He didn't think it necessary to wait any longer, he told her. The nurse would be here immediately. Everything would be all right. He left the house, closing the front door ostentatiously.

Hopgood was waiting out there in the drizzling blackness, with Miss Fraser's big car. The doctor had asked him to wait, he said, to take Miss Copeland to the nursing home. It was not worth while putting the car up again; she would be all right where she was, and it was a bit awkward to turn her in such a narrow space. He would get something to eat and be ready to take Miss Copeland into Waterley the moment she is ready.

"How is she, Colonel?"

The Colonel in response to the acute anxiety of the question was sympathetic.

"Better, Hopgood. But this is a bad business, you know."

Hopgood's voice became vehement.

"Good God, sir, don't I know it? I've known it for months back. I knew there was something wrong about these illnesses of hers."

"Then why didn't you say so, Hopgood? Come on, now, man. Tell me the truth. I believe I know—in fact, I *do* know—why you didn't speak. But you can't shut things up any longer, Hopgood. We know pretty well all about Miss Copeland now."

But Hopgood still baulked. He must see Mr. Theobald first. He edged away.

"I'll go and get something to eat," he said, "and then get back here."

"You're going to do without anything to eat for a bit longer," Gore replied peremptorily. "Now, listen. You'll go now and knock at the door of The Warren. The maid will open the door. You'll ask her, quietly

—without letting Mrs. Copeland know—to tell Miss Copeland that your car is ready to take her into Waterley at once—that arrangements have been altered by the Doctor. If Miss Copeland decides to go—she may, or she may not—and Mrs. Copeland may, or may not go with her . . . that will be as it may turn out—you will drive very slowly for the first hundred yards or so down the avenue. Your grid will carry my weight, won't it? Yes. Got that?"

"Yes, sir."

"If Miss Copeland doesn't go—well, you'll have to wait until word comes along from the nursing home. All quite clear?"

"Yes, sir."

Miss Copeland's eagerness to get to Waterley had not been an appearance merely. Within a quarter of an hour, Gore, waiting in the darkness behind the jagged, sodden shelter of a century-old oak, saw the lights of the big Buick moving down slowly towards him. Without difficulty or slip, he scrambled on to the big grid, which Hopgood had thoughtfully upholstered with a thick rug and a waterproof sheet. Was Mrs. Copeland inside? He rather thought not—though probably it would make no difference, even if she were. Before her daughter's pettish wilfulness, the worthy fat woman's chronic ill-health was powerless.

Gas-lamps. The suburbs of Waterley. A voice inside the car is speaking imperiously. Hopgood turns on his tracks and takes a short cut by some miserable slums. Out into the busy brilliance of Station Road and across into the deserted darkness of Welder Road. The tunnel. The car stops. Miss Copeland is out, and hastening away into the black vault, before the brakes have ceased their whining.

Hopgood came round to the passenger on the grid.

"Hope you're not splashed, sir?"

"Damn the splashed. Mrs. Copeland didn't come, then?"

"No, Colonel."

"Good. Stay just here, will you, Hopgood?"

And so, in the end, as nearly always, if one waited long enough, things had begun to happen just so, Gore reflected, as he made his way along the far side of the tunnel cautiously. Miss Copeland *had* been in a hurry to get to Waterley. She *had* jumped at the chance that had been given her to get there. Well, something interesting—whatever it might be—was extremely likely to happen within the next quarter of an hour.

But, alas, this moment of optimism was of the briefest.

When he arrived within view of the little mute-faced house, Miss Copeland was knocking and ringing vainly at its faded hall door. For ten minutes she knocked and rang. She went out into the middle of the road and called aloud, "Madame Brochard! Madame Brochard!" until Messrs. Ireland & Bunton's watchman stuck a curious head over a wall and demanded "wot the 'ell was to do wiv 'er." Another assault upon the knocker and bell, equally unavailing. Two ribald young workmen came down the road and paused to make derisive noises. Miss Copeland abandoned her attempt to find Madame Brochard, and went wearily back to the safety of the Buick.

Gore had seen what there was to see, for the moment. Nothing was to be gained by any further concealment. While she still hesitated on the footpath, he appeared, and with Hopgood's aid, hustled her into the car, drove her straight to the nursing-home, and turned her over to the care of a very capable and determined matron.

He was back at the house in Welder Road in a quarter of an hour. But Madame Brochard was not at home. Madame Brochard had gone. The little lozenge-

shaped house, eyeless and silent, merged ghostily in the drab shapelessness of the embankment's slope, was empty, save of a secret—— Perhaps, even, of that.

20

An empty house—even if it has been repapered and repainted, and every last trace of its last departed occupants swept and washed and polished away—is a whispering, uneasy place for a listener in the brightest daylight—though bare boards and fresh wall-paper turn the speculations of the lonely intruder rather to his own plans for the future than those of his predecessors for the past. But a house deserted abruptly has the effect of sudden death—not yet believed in, not yet quite accomplished—as if it were being watched in slow-motion. A chair awry, an open book on a table, a dropped handkerchief, a fire recently stirred—a curious significance descends upon those last small traces of hands and feet whose business in that place has ceased, not to be resumed—an interest that not only the curiosity of that intruding listener shares.

It was a matter of greater difficulty than Gore had anticipated to make an entrance into the upper back room, whose window stood on a level with the small flight of wooden steps leading up from the house itself to the top level of the embankment. For, inspired probably by Theobald's raid, a barricade of furniture had been erected to wedge the window and its shutters, in addition to the guard of a number of stout nails driven into the sashes. But, with the assistance of the man whom Kaye had posted on the embankment, and at the cost of some scraped fingers, he forced a way in and made a thorough search of the house from top to bottom, lighting every available gas-jet as he went.

Madame Brochard's own bedroom answered the first question of the moment. Pell-mell disorder—the last sin of an elderly Frenchwoman in her own domain—was sufficiently eloquent. A dental plate had been forgotten on a washstand. After the hastiest of packings, Madame Brochard had departed, pretty clearly, for good.

Kaye's subordinate had seen nothing of this flitting. He had remained, he said, where his orders had posted him, up on the embankment, between the shorter flight of wooden steps leading to the house and the longer flight of stone steps leading down into the road. From that point he should, it seemed, have been able to see any person entering or leaving the house by the hall door. Examination, however, revealed an area door, and steps debouching from it at the foot of the tunnel archway. That way, evidently, the mistress of the house had departed unseen.

There was no visible clue to the reason for this sudden flight in the threadbare poverty of the house, except the fragments of a telegraph envelope lying in the kitchen grate. The plain-clothes man had seen that telegram delivered about two hours before. Madame Brochard had probably, then, an hour and a half's start. A long start.

Yet, because he relied extensively upon impressions, Gore lingered for nearly half an hour in an arm-chair in one of the upper rooms—the front room corresponding to that into which he had forced his entry. It was the largest room in the house, fitted up as a bed-sitting-room combined. In contrast to the rest of the house, it was handsomely and even luxuriously furnished. An expensive carpet, an elaborate bath and wash-up alcove, shaded lights, some etchings, quite respectable in execution if not in subject—a compactum that must have cost thirty or forty guineas. Strange

magnificence for the dreariness of Welder Road, and a lodging-house in which lodgers never stayed longer than a few weeks—so its keeper had declared, accusing the ceaseless uproar of the embankment.

Half an hour of precious time spent over that unexpected interior. But at the end of it Gore thought that he had got from the compactum something that he wanted.

A last rapid survey of Madame's bedroom was rewarded by a piece of unlooked-for good fortune. An upheaval of the aged mattresses of the bed produced from between them a little bundle of letters and other papers, carefully wrapped up in tissue paper and enclosed in an old sponge-bag. Madame had left behind her in her haste a possession even more valuable, Gore decided, than her dental plate.

Inspector Kaye and his men were busy that evening. Mr. Cavendish gave up a *première*, and the chance of meeting the latest actress-manager at supper, to attend to a wire from Waterley: "Marie Brochard missing. Left Waterley last evening 8.15, express for Westpool and London, alone, third-class, small suitcase. Train stopped Westpool, Bath, Reading. Can you find her, please. Combing this end. Try Feuillet's address for wires. Gore. 4222 Waterley."

But it was Gore who ran Madame Brochard to earth towards six o'clock next morning, in a ward of the Royal Berkshire General Infirmary at Reading. She was then expected to die within an hour or so, and unlikely to speak before she did it. The tired-eyed resident physician who was in charge of the case was of opinion that she had swallowed enough arsenic to kill all the dogs in Reading.

Nothing more to be got out of Madame Brochard—at all events for the present.

The dawn was spreading the coils of the Thames with bitter white silver as the powerful car which had rushed Gore and Inspector Kaye over a hundred and twenty miles during the night started on the long, cold return journey. Inspector Kaye was quite wide awake. He had been awake, it seemed, all night.

About forty miles behind, Mr. Cavendish was being hurled through space at an average of 53 m.p.h. He was perspiring a good deal at the palms because the telegraph posts made him dizzyish. But, by keeping his eyes shut, he found that he could just stick it.

21

Twenty-five past eleven by the clock outside the guard-room at Waterley Barracks. Pretty good time. Captain Ingoldsby was orderly officer that morning, but he came stiffly across the frozen gravel of the parade-ground to face Gore's questions under the lee of a captured Bosch field-gun. He looked very smart and trim in uniform, but his face had gone thin and his eyes were shadowed.

He was like a man craving for sleep and unable to contrive it. He couldn't tell anything more. He didn't know anything more. His gloved hand fidgeted with the breech of the gun. His face grew blue and pinched with cold. Inspector Kaye, in the background, stamped his feet impatiently. But no, Ingoldsby had nothing more to tell.

"My God! What do you expect me to tell you?"

Time was perhaps precious. Gore allowed him to crunch off stiffly again across the gravel to rejoin his waiting sergeant.

Burchall, caught in the very act of mounting his horse to hack to a meet up at Hangbury Cross, spruce

as a new pin, strong and lithe as a young lion, but haggard, too, of face. His reception of Gore was stony.

"Look after your own damned business. I know nothing about it. No, I didn't break off my engagement with Miss Copeland. I knew nothing of that. I haven't seen her. I can explain nothing."

"I should advise you, Mr. Burchall," Gore suggested, "to give up your hunting to-day."

"Damn your advice!" said Burchall, and dug his spurs into his horse furiously.

Hopgood not to be found up at Miss Fraser's. It was believed that he had gone into Waterley by the milk train to inquire for Miss Copeland.

"Well——" sighed Gore; "there's no help for it, Inspector. What has to be done must be done. I wish it was *your* job."

Lady Ireland, rose-coloured, despite her black and white frock, in the light of the great open fireplace in the hall of the Castle. Clear of eye, bright of skin—wonderful how much better women stood the strain. She had known from the first, she said, that Gore had come to watch her. Well, she hoped the result had been worth what she hoped it had cost him. Gore's skin was a tough one now, but that little pitiless stab of contempt struck further in through his armour than was comfortable.

"My expenses are guaranteed," he smiled gravely. "Besides—do you really believe, Lady Ireland, that I am your enemy, now?"

She turned her back, the slimmest, most disdainful of backs. "I have nothing to tell you," she said definitely. "I want to hear nothing from you. Do your worst or your best. That is your business."

The back remained immovable. Gore put to it, doggedly, three questions:

"When did you learn that Netta Copeland had been your husband's mistress?"

"You saw someone enter, or leave, your husband's compartment just before you returned to it—after leaving Captain Ingoldsby's compartment—returned to it to find your husband dead. Who was that person?"

"Do you know, or did Miss Copeland at any time say anything to you, which led you to suspect that poison was being administered to her by any person?"

But it was useless. Only the crackling of the fire answered him. He made one last appeal.

"These questions will *have* to be answered, you know."

She turned and swore at him—swore with a fury just as full-blooded as Burchall's. Unpleasant as the quarter of an hour had been, his grey eyes twinkled as he went out into the frosty morning again.

Outside the estate office a big dusty car was waiting. Inside the office was Mr. Cavendish, eyeing with supreme dislike the three junior clerks, while he waited for Stairs' return. Stairs had been sent up to Theobald's bedroom to endeavour to induce Theobald to get up. He returned just then to report that Theobald would *not* get up. Theobald had a bad bilious attack, and was incapable of seeing anyone.

Gore came to the rescue.

"I'll run up and see him," he volunteered.

But first Mr. Cavendish cleared the office, and then filled it with the chilliest and most dashing of mystery.

"I understand that you have some important information bearing on this case. Why haven't you reported it to me?"

"Because I'm waiting to see if it's information, and if it's important," Gore replied tranquilly.

"What is it?"

"At present, a theory. I'm sorry, Mr. Cavendish, I'm not telling till I'm through with this job. Give me—well, say, another hour. I hope to be through with it by then."

The mystery of Mr. Cavendish's large façade became portentous. It must be understood that this case was of a very special nature—there were considerations. Nothing must be done in haste, or without consulting him. He must say that he could not understand Colonel Gore's extraordinary unwillingness to put him in possession of any facts which had come to his knowledge. Issues of the utmost gravity were at stake. He could not be more explicit. But *nothing*—nothing whatever—must be done without consulting him. Gore gave him a cigar and left him to pace the office, while he went up to interview Theobald.

His procedure with Theobald was summary. He locked the bedroom door, dragged the occupant of the bed on to the floor, and poured the contents of the water-jug over him. Then he huddled him into some clothes and a dressing-gown and gave him a stiffish drink. And after that he repeated to him, over and over, the following questions :

"Were you aware that Netta Copeland had been Sir William Ireland's mistress for several years before his death ?"

"Was this not the hold which you had over him, and which you attempted to use to induce him not to dismiss you ?"

"Were you not aware that Sir William was in the habit of meeting this girl at Madame Brochard's house in Welder Road ?"

"Had you reason to believe that she was meeting other men there, or any other man ?"

"Why did you break into the house on December 14th ?"

" Did you see any person or persons enter or leave the slip-carriage while it was waiting in the siding ? "

" Who was the person you saw ? "

" Who was the person who attacked you in the Park and took your rook rifle from you ? "

Over and over, monotonously, the questions were repeated. Theobald, recovered now a little, rose up once and made a dizzy attempt to eject his persecutor. Without pity, Gore knocked him sprawling across the bed, picked him up again, shook him like a rat, and threw him back into his chair. The pitiless third-degree resumed. There were knockings at the door, explanations that Mr. Cavendish desired to see Colonel Gore and Mr. Theobald at once. But it was nearly an hour before Theobald gave in. Yes. He had known all about Netta Copeland and that old scoundrel Ireland—that game had been going on for years. Not the only game of the sort that the old blackguard had amused himself with. He *had* used that knowledge to try to scare the old brute that afternoon he had gone up to see him at Westpool. Why not ? Yes. He *had* known that this girl used to go to the house in Welder Road to meet old Ireland. He and Hoppood and Beechinor had kept watch on what was going on there, on and off, for the past three years. He had known that there was some other hanky-panky going on there. Several men used the house, he knew, for storing stuff of some sort. It went in and out at all hours of the day when the road was quiet, as it nearly always was. He had come to the conclusion that it was opium. He had seen two or three foreigners about the house frequently—never, however, when Sir William was there. The old dame was in the game. She used to keep watch along the road. Yes ; he had known that the Copeland girl was meeting other men at the house—at any rate, she was there when

one other man went there. He wasn't going to say who that man was. That was not his affair. But he knew who he was. He broke into the house and took away the packing-cases he found in the cellar, to try and scare the old woman and her pals, and break up the happy home. He wasn't going to explain anything more about that. But he had to do something. He knew that Lady Ireland believed that someone was administering poison to Miss Copeland. Lady Ireland had practically told him so one day in October, and that the girl was getting the stuff at some place she was in the habit of going to when she went out. He had made up his own mind that something damn queer was going on—that was why he had tried to break up the happy home. He didn't know for certain who had taken his gun from him that evening in the Park, but he guessed. The last question held him silent and anguished.

"My God, man, how can *you* understand what Cicely means to a boozing old rotter like me? Not because I'm her cousin——" He broke off with a gesture. "Yes," he ended defiantly; "I woke up and saw Burchall getting out of the carriage. I think I spoke to him—but I was half-screwed. He didn't hear. Well, do you think that, knowing as I do that Burchall is the light of *her* eyes, I was going to hang him? I don't like him; I don't think he's fit to wipe her shoes—but I couldn't hang him. By God, if she had killed that old hound with her own hands, I would have said, 'Well done!'"

The sagging, dissipated face was transformed. The bleared eyes were lighted with the confession of the passionate devotion that had probably been the best and highest thing in the man's futile life. All the obscurities of Claud Theobald were in a flash made plain.

Downstairs, the clerks had returned and were busily bent over their desks. Stairs was still endeavouring to calm Mr. Cavendish's impatience.

Mr. Cavendish's eyebrows went up in protest when Gore appeared alone.

"What's the meaning of this?" he demanded. "Where is Mr. Theobald?"

"Mr. Theobald is unable to come down."

Mr. Cavendish's arm brandished at the industrious clerks. "Send these people away," he said. "And don't let them come back. I don't know why they've come back."

At a nod from Gore the three juniors rose and disappeared with rapidity. Stairs was about to follow them.

"Just a moment, Mr. Stairs," Gore requested. "You may be able to assist me in a small matter."

"Certainly, sir."

"Come here," Gore said quietly. "I want to ask you whether you have ever seen this document before?"

He had taken from his pocket a sheet of large-sized notepaper, frayed and soiled, and covered with a large, untidy handwriting. Stairs, who stood by his side, eyed it stonily. His throat was dry and harsh as he shook his head slightly, and answered, "No, sir."

"I'll read it to you, Stairs: 'October 24th, 1925. My dear Baby,—I have had a talk with F. S. this afternoon. He has had no experience of estate work in England, but seems capable and energetic. I have decided to adopt your suggestion and to appoint him agent temporarily. But I think it will be *wise* that this should not be done until *after* your marriage to him. That will make it seem more natural. I understood

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from him that this would take place the week after next. Is this so? There will be no difficulty in getting rid of T., I think—on the score of drunkenness and inefficiency. Destroy this.—Your Unkums. P.S.—See you to-morrow afternoon, usual time. Full of love.' ”

Gore raised his eyes. Again that strangled, husky “No, sir.”

“You're quite sure, Stairs, that you don't know who the ‘F.’ S.’ is to whom Sir William Ireland—this is Sir William's handwriting, you know—had decided to give the agency of the estate in place of Mr. Theobald?”

“No, sir.”

“Your own initials are ‘F. S.’?”

“‘J. F. S.,’ sir.”

Gore folded the letter and put it away carefully.

“I see. Where were you last night, Stairs, between eight and eleven o'clock?”

“In Waterley, sir—at the theatre.”

“You were not in the first-class restaurant at Bath, at nine o'clock or thereabouts, when the London train was in the station?”

“No, sir.”

“You didn't buy two cups of tea and take them out to the train? The reason I ask is, that someone exactly answering your description did——”

There was no reply this time. Gore rose to his feet rather quickly.

“A porter saw someone answering your description carry two cups of tea to a third-class carriage. One cup was given in through the window to an elderly woman in the carriage. The man who had brought it to her drank his own cup standing on the platform, where he remained until the train had gone out. That woman, I believe, was Madame Brochard. You're sure you can't tell me whether I am right?”

Prepared as he was, Gore was all but late for the

movement of Stairs' hand to his coat-pocket. But he had just time to swing himself aside a little, before a deafening report and the crash of a window behind him, assured him how narrow his escape had been. He grabbed at the dangerous hand, all but lost it, heard a second report, and had a glimpse of Mr. Cavendish scuttling for the door, before he and Stairs were down on the floor, gouging and fouling, fighting for the use of the reeking Webley. It was a close thing ; Stairs fought like a madman. But, in response to Cavendish's squeals of alarm, the clerks came rushing in to the rescue. The fray ended with a curious tameness. Stairs fainted.

They were standing round him, watching him come to, when Mr. Cavendish re-entered the room cautiously.

"What has happened ?" he asked. He caught sight of Stairs. "Is he dead ?"

In that unfortunate moment, every face turned to the questioner. Only for an instant, but it gave Stairs his chance. Gore turned back to him just in time to see the hand that fumbled at lips already agonised.

PART IV
AFTER THE CURTAIN

AFTER THE CURTAIN¹

I

JAMES FRASER STAIRS, son of Ephraim Stairs, the well-known explorer and naturalist, was an M.C. and D.S.O. of the Great War, and, until about 1924, had held a clean record. Inheriting his father's love of adventure and travel, he had spent a considerable fortune knocking about the world, especially the more out of the way regions of it. In 1924 he came in contact with Jules Feuillet in Bombay, whence the latter was then shipping a load of the forbidden goods in which he and his partners had been trafficking successfully for several years. Detecting in Stairs a promising assistant, Feuillet found little difficulty in enlisting him in a lucrative, if risky, business, and the consignment of hashish travelled to Madagascar and thence to Abyssinia under Stairs' supervision. He came to England and, for purposes of camouflage, obtained employment at North Pier, a base convenient for his new service, which concerned itself mainly with the smuggling in of consignments from the Bristol Channel, and the care and distribution of them from Madame Brochard's house in Welder Road in Waterley. These duties necessitated frequent visits to the house, in the course of which he made, unfortunately, the acquaintance of Netta Copeland.

¹ While it seems necessary to make clear Stairs' share in the affair, the reader will find no difficulty, at this stage, as to the significance of the other details of the narrative which, until the *dénouement*, may have appeared obscure.

Of this young woman the facts already narrated speak sufficiently clearly. Not so much vicious, as absolutely unmoral, circumstances had made her their victim before she had reached her eighteenth year. Greedy for pleasure, expensive clothes, jewellery, and the usual gewgaws of temptation, she had yielded easily enough to the solicitations of the depraved elderly man with whom her fate had thrown her into daily contact. Her intimacy with him had lasted at least four years when it came to an abrupt stop. There is no doubt that if Sir William Ireland had not actually wearied of it, at the time of his death, he had begun to look about for a means to free himself from a too dangerous embarrassment by its heroine.

As Gore had surmised, the meetings of the pair had been taking place under Madame Brochard's roof, where Ireland had had a room specially fitted up for their tête-à-têtes. Great care had been taken to insure that no other visitors clashed with the hours of these amorous rendezvous. Netta Copeland, however, had been in former days a pupil of the once respectable Madame Brochard (to do him justice, it is certain that Feuillet knew nothing of his aunt's complicity in old Ireland's depravity) and she was in the habit of visiting the house frequently, when her aged lover was not expected. Stairs made her acquaintance, fell in love with her, and, knowing nothing of her past history, became engaged to her—secretly, at her request.

Already, it seems, Madame Brochard had begun to see visions of a goose that would lay golden eggs to gild her declining days comfortably. It was she who suggested to Netta Copeland the project of inducing Sir William Ireland to get rid of his present estate agent, and to appoint (at a very handsome salary) her future husband in his place. To this proposal Stairs, naturally

enough, consented with alacrity—and, as it seems, as yet without suspicion. Sir William, as we know, consented to a proposal which would hang a mistress, of whom he was a little afraid, around the neck of a husband. He interviewed Stairs on October 24th—four days before his death—and afterwards wrote to Miss Copeland that note which Gore found between Madame Brochard's mattresses. No doubt Miss Copeland passed the note on to Stairs; equally without doubt, Madame Brochard, for her own purposes, must have contrived to possess herself of it.

So matters stood between Stairs and his fiancée on the evening of October 28th. On that evening they met by appointment at Madame Brochard's at or about a quarter to seven. (Hopgood, who had been watching Madame Brochard's house all that afternoon, had followed her there from the Copeland's house, where she had found him awaiting her on her arrival in Burchall's car.) Netta Copeland—the only one who might have been able to do so—was unable to explain what cause had suddenly aroused Stairs' suspicions. But aroused, and thoroughly, they had been, now, in regard to this splendid appointment which was being thrust upon him. She had found him awaiting her coming, determined to know the truth, and the truth his furious jealousy, rising swiftly to murderous rage, had torn from her cowardice in less than ten minutes. According to her account, he kicked and beat her like a dog, and then took a revolver from his pocket and threatened to shoot her. But a better revenge, it seems, must have flashed into his mind then. It was a few minutes before seven. She had told him that Sir William was returning to Shenstone by his usual train. In fear of her life, with the revolver pressed against her body, he dragged her out through the windows of the upper room, up the steps on to the embankment, and across the rails to the

goods yard, where they stood waiting until the slip-carriage rolled into the siding and came to rest. She cried out once—the cry which the permanent-way man heard. But he stifled her with a stunning blow on the mouth.

The rest was such horror as, by her own account, had all but obliterated her knowledge and memory of what had passed. Stairs had dragged her across to the carriage, forced her to climb into it. He had caught sight of Theobald, in drunken sleep, and had hesitated in his purpose, until the handle of the knife, projecting from its brown paper cover, lying on the cushion, as if placed there for his purpose, had confirmed it. He had snatched up the knife, thrown open the door of the first-class compartment, and, before its helpless occupant could move or cry out, had stabbed him above the heart. Another blow, and then he had forced the knife into her hand and compelled her palsied arm to strike a third. Even then, his revenge had seemed incomplete. He had grasped the throat from which blood was streaming, and had strangled the last breath of his victim. Of the return journey to the house the wretched girl remembered nothing. Her next consciousness was of finding herself alone, lying on the carpet of the room which had been the scene of her ill-fated meetings with the man whom she had just seen murdered. There Madame Brochard had found her.

A period of tortured fear had followed—but nothing had happened. For a little space security had seemed assured. But Stairs had not judged that assurance enough. Two deadly menaces hung over his head—the girl who knew and the old woman who guessed—all but knew, too; for Madame Brochard had undoubtedly assisted in getting rid of some of the ghastly soilings of the crime. Of both dangers, it is clear, he swiftly made up his mind to rid himself.

His first step had been to force Miss Copeland to accept Lady Ireland's invitation to Shenstone Castle (an invitation inspired by Burchall), and thus place her at a convenient distance for his desperate purpose. He was aware now (for he had wrested all secrets from her) that she had had something more than a flirtation with Dudley Burchall, and it was beneath the compulsion of his threats to take her life that she set herself deliberately to inveigle Burchall into making her his wife. That accomplished—it had apparently been a matter of curious simplicity—he had proceeded with his plan with relentless method. The chocolates which Miss Copeland had been in the habit of procuring through Madame Brochard had provided him with the most obvious of means to his end. It has been narrated with what results his intentions were carried into execution. His appointment as assistant to Theobald had been easily engineered through Burchall's infatuation for Miss Copeland.

The arrival of Gore upon the scene—from the first he had been perfectly aware of Gore's identity—had precipitated matters. The final disaster had been the mismanagement of his attempt to close Madame Brochard's mouth for good and all—an attempt carried out precisely as Gore had divined. (Madame Brochard's hasty departure had been caused by a telegram warning her to make her escape to London and Paris while she could.) But probably his most stupid blunder was his double failure to kill Gore with Theobald's rabbit rifle.

As Ingoldsby had guessed, Lady Ireland, as she was leaving his compartment, had caught sight—just as Theobald had—of Burchall leaving the carriage. The ticket which Ingoldsby picked up was, in fact, Burchall's, whose movements that evening were almost exactly as Gore had surmised them. Burchall climbed into the

slip-carriage just three minutes after Stairs and his companion had left it. He admitted that what he had seen when he had opened the door of the first-class compartment—his intention had been to attempt again to persuade Sir William to reasonableness—had filled him with such horror that, foreseeing the strong suspicion that might fall upon himself, he had pulled the door to again and hurried back into the safety of the darkness, to the car which waited for him down in Tip and Run Lane.

It is a curious commentary on the complexities of human nature that Lady Ireland, haunted by the dread that Burchall's hand had killed her husband, consented to endure even the society of Netta Copeland for seven months, to shield him. And that Burchall—though he refused to admit this in words—more than suspected that it was Ingoldsby who had freed her from her hated bonds. No word as to those secret doubts ever passed between the two, so much is certain, until Stairs was dead and buried and the truth known.

2

"A perfectly simple, straightforward case," was Gore's opinion for his junior partner's benefit. "I don't think I ever had a case in which it was easier to avoid the fatal mistake of feeling sure about anyone or anything until the last moment. With one woman given, obviously one looked for the second—and the Copeland girl stared one in the face. It was mere stupidity that I didn't advert sooner to the medical evidence about the smaller wound in Ireland's neck. Anyone who had thought of it for a moment would have realised that if the pen-knife had shut up when that third blow was delivered—a feeble, quite in-

effectual blow it was—it was almost certain that the blade must have caught the fingers of the hand that used the knife. Certainly the scars on the girl's hand were plain enough—if one had been able to get a look at them.

“And then it was sheer luck finding that letter of Ireland's between old Madame's blankets. The other letters were notes from Miss Copeland to Madame, enclosing money or promising to send it. The old dame was bleeding the unfortunate girl like a leech.


“The really interesting aspect of the case was the curious conspiracy to keep silence. Everybody had the best of reasons for saying nothing.

“No. I don't think anything is going to happen the Copeland. Oh yes; she helped to do the job, all right. But—well, it's lucky for her that there's been all this fuss about marketing honours—— You see, not only had old Ireland paid up £20,000 for his baronetcy four years ago—he came across with £45,000 for the health of the Party just a month before his death. He was to have been Lord Shenstone in the New Year's List—— Now it would be rather awkward, I gather, if it came out just now that this bulwark of the Government had been too fond of little peroxidized babies——

“Burchall? Well, Burchall seems difficult to explain—but he's really as simple as a periwinkle if you bend your pin a bit. The beggar was—*is*—certainly in love with Lady Ireland—— But he was—and *is* still—infatuated with the Copeland girl. Folly—— But there it is. Poor old Hopgood is pretty silly about her. But it's mania with Burchall—— I hear he talks of marrying her and taking her out to Kenya. Well, it's all interesting—so long as it keeps you guessing—— They're deporting Madame Brochard as soon as she's fit enough. She's getting on nicely, I hear.

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"By gad—I wish I was out after the pheasants this morning, Tolley. You know, my boy, I'm not *quite* sure that I shouldn't have made quite a respectable agent——Two old ladies to see me? Oh—*God* bless them! Bung them in, Stephens."



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